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# MEDIEVAL MONASTIC PREACHING

EDITED BY

CAROLYN MUESSIG



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## CONTENTS

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| Preface.....              | ix   |
| Acknowledgments.....      | xi   |
| List of Contributors..... | xiii |
| Abbreviations.....        | xv   |

### PART ONE

#### INTRODUCTION

|                                                                              |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| What is Medieval Monastic Preaching? An Introduction<br>CAROLYN MUESSIG..... | 3 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

### PART TWO

#### CARTHUSIAN PREACHING

|                                                                                                                  |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Why did Denys the Carthusian Write <i>Sermones ad Saeculares</i> ?<br>DENYS TURNER.....                          | 19 |
| “ <i>Shining Forth like the Dawn</i> ”: Jean Gerson’s Sermon to the<br>Carthusians<br>BRIAN PATRICK MCGUIRE..... | 37 |
| Early Fifteenth-Century Chapterhouse Sermons at the<br>Charterhouse of Mainz<br>JAMES HOGG.....                  | 53 |

### PART THREE

#### THE *CURA MONIALIUM* IN GERMANY AND ENGLAND

|                                                                                  |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Sermons for Nuns of the Dominican Observance Movement<br>REGINA D. SCHIEWER..... | 75 |
| Preaching to Nuns in Late Medieval England<br>V.M. O’MARA.....                   | 93 |

## PART FOUR

## PREACHING BY ITALIAN NUNS AND HERMITS

|                                                                                    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Authority and Inspiration in the <i>Vitae</i> and Sermons of<br>Humility of Faenza |     |
| CATHERINE M. MOONEY.....                                                           | 123 |
| Preaching by Italian Hermits                                                       |     |
| GEORGE FERZOCO.....                                                                | 145 |

## PART FIVE

## PREACHING BY AND AGAINST THE CATHARS

|                                                                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's<br>Preaching against the Cathars |     |
| BEVERLY MAYNE KIENZLE.....                                                            | 163 |
| The Preaching of the Cathars                                                          |     |
| JOHN ARNOLD.....                                                                      | 183 |

## PART SIX

## PREACHING MONASTIC REFORM

|                                                                                                                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| The Religious's Role in a Post-Fourth-Lateran World:<br>Jacques de Vitry's <i>Sermones ad Status</i> and <i>Historia Occidentalis</i> |     |
| JESSALYNN BIRD .....                                                                                                                  | 209 |
| Monastic Ideals and Episcopal Visitations: The <i>Sermo ad</i><br><i>Religiosos</i> of Robert Grosseteste                             |     |
| JAMES R. GINTHER.....                                                                                                                 | 231 |

## PART SEVEN

## BENEDICTINE PREACHING IN ENGLAND

|                                                                                                     |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Benedictine Sermons: Preparation and Practice in the<br>English Monastic Cathedral Cloisters        |     |
| JOAN GREATREX.....                                                                                  | 257 |
| Benedictines and Preaching the <i>Pastoralia</i> in Late Medieval<br>England: A Preliminary Inquiry |     |
| PATRICK J. HORNER.....                                                                              | 279 |

PART EIGHT

CISTERCIAN PREACHING

|                                                                       |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Were the Sermons of St Bernard on the Song of Songs ever<br>Preached? |     |
| CHRISTOPHER HOLDSWORTH.....                                           | 295 |
| Killing Time: An Essay on the Monastic Notion of Speed                |     |
| M.B. PRANGER .....                                                    | 319 |
| The Liturgical Dimension of Twelfth-Century Cistercian<br>Preaching   |     |
| CHRYSOGONUS WADDELL.....                                              | 335 |
| General Index .....                                                   | 351 |



## PREFACE

During 2–5 April 1997 a conference was held at Downside Abbey, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, UK, to study medieval monastic preaching. Eighteen scholars from Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, The Netherlands, the UK, and the USA presented their research focusing on medieval monks and nuns who were involved in pastoral care. Most of the examples discussed at the conference dealt with monks and nuns who either preached, heard, or read monastic sermons. Sermons addressed to monastic communities by secular preachers were also investigated. It emerged from the papers that there existed a wonderful diversity in monastic preaching, for example: monks preaching in the calm of the cloister; preaching by heretical monks; and preaching by nuns and hermits in public and private arenas. With an addition of an introduction touching upon the main themes raised at the four day colloquium, this volume offers a selection of the rich findings presented at the conference, findings which provide a preliminary understanding of how sermons and preaching shaped monastic identity in the middle ages.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CCCM          | Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis (Turnhout, 1966–)                                                                                                                                             |
| CSEL          | Corpus scriptorium ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna and Leipzig, 1866–)                                                                                                                                  |
| PL            | Patrologia Latina, ed. J.P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–64)                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>RB</i>     | <i>RB 1980 The Rule of St Benedict in Latin and English with Notes</i> . Ed. Timothy Fry. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1981.                                                                 |
| <i>Revb</i>   | <i>Revue bénédictine</i> (Maredsous, 1884–)                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>SBO</i>    | Bernard of Clairvaux. <i>S. Bernardi Opera</i> . Eds. Jean Leclercq, Henri Rochais, and C.H. Talbot. 8 vols. Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–77.                                                       |
| <i>SoSS</i> 1 | Bernard of Clairvaux, <i>On the Song of Songs I</i> , trans. Kilian Walsh, intro. M. Corneille Halfants, Cistercian Fathers Series 4. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1979.                  |
| <i>SoSS</i> 2 | Bernard of Clairvaux, <i>On the Song of Songs II</i> , trans. Kilian Walsh, intro. Jean Leclercq, Cistercian Fathers Series 7. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1976.                         |
| <i>SoSS</i> 3 | Bernard of Clairvaux, <i>On the Song of Songs III</i> , trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene M. Edmonds, intro. Emero Stiegman, Cistercian Fathers Series 31. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1979. |
| <i>SoSS</i> 4 | Bernard of Clairvaux, <i>On the Song of Songs IV</i> , trans. Irene M. Edmonds, intro. Jean Leclercq, Cistercian Fathers Series 40. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1980.                    |



**PART ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**



# WHAT IS MEDIEVAL MONASTIC PREACHING? AN INTRODUCTION

Carolyn Muessig

(*University of Bristol*)

## *Introduction*

In recent years, much attention has been paid to mendicant sermons and history.<sup>1</sup> Comparable studies of the history of monastic preaching are lacking. There do exist many editions of monastic sermons, but there are no detailed accounts of the rich and diverse history of medieval monastic preaching. Hence, the objective of this volume is to offer a preliminary investigation into how monks and nuns communicated their ideals and beliefs to one another in pastoral contexts, and to examine the aims, the audiences, and the messengers of monastic preaching. Furthermore, this study also investigates secular clergy who preached to monks and nuns in order to reform monastic life; some of these preachers and their sermons will be studied as a form of monastic preaching history insofar as their endeavors were intended to correct and to improve monastic life. The scope of this volume covers the period from c.1135 to 1500, and, roughly, the geographical areas of England, France, Germany, Italy, and the Low Countries.

## *Definition of preaching*

Defining medieval preaching is a difficult task. There are a variety of explanations that one could give, yet a concise definition

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<sup>1</sup> Some examples of such studies include: Bernadette Paton, *Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos: Siena, 1380–1480* (London, 1992); David d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985); Jussi Hanska, "And the Rich Man also Died; and He was Buried in Hell": *The Social Ethos in Mendicant Sermons* (Helsinki, 1997); Daniel L. Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence: The Social World of Franciscan and Dominican Spirituality* (Athens, GA, 1989); Christoph T. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994).



obscures its multifaceted character. The interpretation of preaching given by Alan of Lille (†1203) has greatly influenced how modern scholars define medieval preaching in general. In his *Ars praedicandi*, he describes it as a public instruction in morals and faith which is based on reason and authority.<sup>2</sup> An echo of this medieval explication is found in Jean Longère's book *La prédication médiévale*. Longère describes preaching as a public discourse based on divine revelation in the framework of an organized society, aiming toward the beginning or to the development of faith and of religious knowledge, and equally to the conversion or to the spiritual progress of the hearers.<sup>3</sup> Both these interpretations do concisely outline many aspects of preaching, yet they do not relay in any detail the varied forms in which such a discourse could take place.

Indeed, monastic preaching could be a variegated experience. While monks are usually associated with sermonizing in chapter to their brethren, popular preaching is often identified with mendicant friars, parish priests, and bishops preaching before large audiences in churches or large outdoor venues.<sup>4</sup> Yet, some monks were quite active in the public arena.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, not only monks but nuns were known to preach in the cloister and in public.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, sometimes clerics came to monastic houses to preach. In other cases, the preaching event was sometimes more of an armchair experience because in certain convents nuns would read sermons to themselves when a preacher was not available.<sup>7</sup>

Just as there exists a difficulty in summarizing what constitutes preaching, there is also a similar problem in defining sermons. This is greatly owing to the situation of studying a written genre which is supposed to represent an oral event. For example, the

---

<sup>2</sup> *Praedicatio est manifesta et publica instructio morum et fidei, informationi hominum deserviens, ex rationum semita et auctoritatum fonte proveniens*. Alan of Lille, *Summa de arte praedicationis*, PL 210, 111C.

<sup>3</sup> Jean Longère, *La prédication médiévale* (Paris, 1983) 12.

<sup>4</sup> See d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 29–43.

<sup>5</sup> For an example of an active monk preacher see the description of Hélinand of Froidmont in Beverly M. Kienzle, "Hélinand de Froidmont et la prédication cistercienne dans le Midi (1145–1229)," in *La prédication en Pays d'Oc (XII<sup>e</sup>–début XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 32 (Fanjeaux, 1997) 37–67.

<sup>6</sup> See Beverly M. Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching against the Cathars," and Catherine Mooney, "Authority and Inspiration in the *Vitae* and Sermons of Humility of Faenza," in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> See Regina Schiewer, "Sermons for Nuns of the Dominican Observance Movement," in this volume.

various analyses of Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs* indicate the difficulties that arise when studying orality through a written source.<sup>8</sup> When a genre that is supposed to be oral can only be recorded for posterity in a textual form, the relationship between the written record and the preaching event becomes clouded.<sup>9</sup> The textual witness may introduce a misunderstanding, an assumption that such "texts" were never preached.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the form and style of sermons could come in various packages, sometimes appearing to be treatises, letters, biblical commentaries, and saints' lives, adding further confusion to what constitutes the content of preaching.<sup>11</sup>

### *The monastic right to preach*

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries many who wished to lead the *vita apostolica* desired to preach. These centuries witnessed an increase in devotion on the part of monks and clerics to become more involved with the *cura animarum*, which included preaching. Consequently, these centuries also witnessed the development of a controversy between monks and clerics over who had the right to the *cura animarum*.<sup>12</sup> Some argued, usually the clerics, that it belonged to the sacerdotal ministry and not to those in the monastic

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<sup>8</sup> See Christopher Holdsworth's summary of these arguments in, "Were the Sermons of St Bernard on the Song of Songs ever Preached?", in this volume.

<sup>9</sup> Beverly M. Kienzle has articulated this problem succinctly: *The written text is an inexact reflection of a preaching event. For medieval sermon studies, one of the primary problems of research, if not the primary problem is determining whether there is a relationship between the text and an actual oral discourse and what that relationship is.* See, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "The Typology of the Medieval Sermon and Its Development in the Middle Ages: Report on Work in Progress," in *De l'homélie au sermon: Histoire de la prédication médiévale. Actes du Colloque internationale de Louvain-la-Neuve (9-11 juillet 1992)*, eds. Jacqueline Hamesse and Xavier Hermand, Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales, Textes, Études, Congrès 14 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993) 81-101, at 87.

<sup>10</sup> See Holdsworth, "Were the Sermons of St Bernard on the Song of Songs ever Preached?" (see note 8).

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the difficulty defining sermons and preaching see, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "The Typology of the Medieval Sermon," 86-7.

<sup>12</sup> See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982) 29. The issue was also debated by the laity who sometimes claimed the right to preach. See Rolf Zerfaß, *Der Streit um die Laienpredigt. Eine pastoralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Verständnis des Predigtamtes und zu seiner Entwicklung in 12 und 13 Jahrhundert* (Freiburg, 1974).

vocation to preach.<sup>13</sup> Such clerics maintained that preaching was in their domain, while monks were to be penitent but not pastoral.<sup>14</sup>

Sometimes monastic writers themselves indicated uneasiness about monks going out of the cloister to preach.<sup>15</sup> The canonist Gratian, who most likely was a monk,<sup>16</sup> reveals this attitude. Defining the natural disposition of a monk, Gratian concluded that it would be detrimental to the monk's health to leave the cloister:

[A monk] is happy in his cloister since, just as a fish out of water cannot survive, so too a monk outside of his monastery [cannot survive]. Therefore; a solitary should remain still and keep silent, although he is dead to the world, he nevertheless lives for God.<sup>17</sup>

But there were many who believed that monastic ascetics made the best preachers because of their holy lives.<sup>18</sup> This conviction is witnessed especially in the examples of nuns who, living exemplary lives, became preachers.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, regardless of the tone of Gratian's above mentioned quote, even the *Decretum* indicated at least a limited role for monks who were ordained priest to have some involvement in the *cura animarum*.<sup>20</sup> These patterns of

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<sup>13</sup> Giles Constable, "Monasteries, Rural Churches and the *Cura animarum* in the Early Middle Ages," in *Monks, Hermits and Crusaders in Medieval Europe* (London, 1988) 349–89; Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996) 227–9.

<sup>14</sup> Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 29–30.

<sup>15</sup> Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 228: *The reformed monks were also divided. For the most part they wanted to reassert the distinctive character of the monastic order and agreed with the clergy that pastoral work was not the proper concern of monks, who were supposed to be withdrawn from the world and devoted to prayer.*

<sup>16</sup> The evidence, however, that Gratian was a monk is not conclusive. See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987) 229.

<sup>17</sup> ... sit claustrum suo contentus, quia sicut pisces sine aqua caret uita, ita sine monasterio monachus. Sedeat itaque solitarius, et taceat, quia mundo mortuus est, Deo autem uiuit. A. Friedberg, ed., *Corpus iuris canonici*, Ia, *Decretum Magistri Gratiani* (1879; reprint, Graz, 1959) [Henceforth, this will be cited as *Decretum*.] Causa 16, cap. 8, 763. Causa 16 discusses in great detail issues related to monastic and clerical spiritual jurisdiction. See *Decretum*, 761–812.

<sup>18</sup> Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 30.

<sup>19</sup> See Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," (see note 6).

<sup>20</sup> *Decretum*, Causa 16, 7, dictum post 38, 811. See Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 230: *Their right to celebrate in private chapels and oratories not belonging to the monastery and above all to serve as parish priests, unless specifically authorized to do so by the bishop, was much less clear and was not officially approved by the papacy until the end of the twelfth century. It was accepted in practice, however, and recognized in canon law, partly on the basis of texts that were forged, probably in the mid-eleventh century, specifically to justify the exercise of the cura*

monastic preaching begin to illuminate its varied and sometimes unpredictable nature.

*Is monasticism active or contemplative?*

Perceptions of what actually constituted the monastic life affected opinions and practices in regard to monks' and nuns' involvement in preaching. Medieval people did not perceive monasticism very straightforwardly. It could consist of eremitical, cenobitic, active, and contemplative elements. It could be lived with the ascetic rigor practiced by the Camaldolese, or with moderation as indicated in the Rule of Benedict. Moreover, there were differences of opinion concerning to what degree monastic life should be active or contemplative. There were also divergent opinions on what constituted contemplative and active lives, and this had much bearing on the acceptance or rejection of monastic preaching.<sup>21</sup>

Whether monks should lead an active life and go out and preach varied in theory and practice in the West within the earliest monastic movements. The Irish monastic communities in the sixth and seventh centuries were dedicated to preaching the word of God in distant lands.<sup>22</sup> Gregory the Great did indicate that monks who were priests could carry out pastoral functions, especially in the capacity of evangelizers.<sup>23</sup> The famous envoy of monks that he sent to Canterbury testifies to this practice; but in general Gregory saw a mixture of the two lives as inappropriate because monastic practices would suffer:

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*animarum by monks. Some of these were cited a century later in the Decretum by Gratian, who accepted a limited right of monks to perform pastoral work and receive spiritual revenues, subject to the control of bishops, and who was followed by later canonists. In spite of regional variations, there were few parts of Europe in the twelfth century where monks did not serve in parish churches.*

<sup>21</sup> For example, Gregory the Great wrote: *No man can serve both under ecclesiastical obedience and also continue under a monastic rule, observing the strict regime of a monastery when he is obliged to remain in the daily service of the church.* See *Gregorii I Papae Registrum Epistolarum* 1, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (1891), eds. P. Ewald and L.M. Hartmann, 281–2. Translation taken from C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (1989) 33. See also note 24 below.

<sup>22</sup> The Irish monk Columbanus is just one example of a monk who was an active evangelizer and preacher. See Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 44–53.

<sup>23</sup> Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 33.

No one can discharge ecclesiastical functions and consistently observe the monastic rule.<sup>24</sup>

This tension between the role of the active monk versus that of the contemplative monk became more pronounced in the central middle ages. From the eleventh century onward, the clergy argued more frequently and strongly that monks should not go out and preach, and that, instead of leaving the cloister to tend to the spiritual needs of others, they should stay in the cloister and pray. Canon 16 from the First Lateran Council of 1123, indicated that monks were not permitted to carry out pastoral care. They were not to celebrate masses in public, visit the sick, and hear confessions since these duties had nothing to do with their calling.<sup>25</sup> But as the twelfth century progressed, more emphasis was placed on the active life as somehow representing the ideal of Christian perfection better than the contemplative life. Innocent III was one of the leading thinkers who promoted and represented this ideal.<sup>26</sup> These spiritual aspirations influenced all Christians—clerics, nuns, monks, and lay people. However, some reforming clerics, perhaps in an attempt to restrain this move toward a universally active Christian community, taught that the ideal of monasticism did not contain a pastoral dimension and that the core preoccupation of monastic life was contemplation.<sup>27</sup>

Although the details of the circumstances changed, the debate concerning the role and right of monastic orders to be involved in pastoral care continued throughout the medieval period.

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<sup>24</sup> *Nemo etenim potest ecclesiasticis obsequiis deservire, et in monachica regula ordinate persistere. Registri Epistolarum, Liber 5, indict. 13, "Epist. 1," PL 77, 722.*

<sup>25</sup> *Publicas missarum sollemnitates nusquam celebrent. A publicis etiam infirmorum visitationibus, inunctionibus seu etiam poenitentiis, quod ad illorum nullatenus officium pertinet, sese omnino abstineant.* Norman Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London, 1990) 1:193. Lawrence, 33.

<sup>26</sup> For further discussion see, Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought: The Interpretation of Mary and Martha, The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ, The Orders of Society* (Cambridge, 1995) 3–141, especially 93–100.

<sup>27</sup> See Jessalynn Bird, "The Religious's Role in a Post-Fourth-Lateran World: Jacques de Vitry's *Sermones ad Status* and *Historia Occidentalis*", and James Ginther, "Monastic Ideals and Episcopal Visitations: The *Sermo ad Religiosos* of Robert Grosseteste," in this volume.

*Various themes of Medieval Monastic Preaching:*

The following is a summary of themes that are in this volume. Instead of presenting a chronological progression of the issues, a thematic approach is proposed in order to indicate possible avenues of research.

*Carthusian preaching*

Not only did clerics and monks disagree over the question of monastic preaching, but in fact, the perception of monastic involvement in regard to an active ministry often differed among individuals within the same order. Turning to the fifteenth century, this is witnessed in the career of Denys the Carthusian. Denys's literary output was frowned upon by the members of his order; they perceived him as too involved in pastoral matters which they believed should not be the concern of Carthusians in their monastic pursuit of solitude. But Denys's view was quite different than that of his contemporary brethren: he believed that preaching, like the hearing of confession and teaching of theology, came very close to being a contemplative performance. He also maintained that his massive scholarly output was in the contemplative vein, and, therefore, his writing down of sermons was very important since he himself, being a Carthusian, could not preach the sermons outside of the cloister.<sup>28</sup>

As alluded to above, there was also much that clerics had to say on the matter of monastic pastoral care. It is interesting to note that in regard to Carthusian monks the cleric Jean Gerson, who was an older contemporary of Denys the Carthusian, mirrored the view found among those Carthusian monks who opposed Denys. Jean Gerson's image of Carthusian perfection is depicted in a sermon where he argues that Carthusian monks should remain in solitude seeking protection for the soul in an eremitical life.<sup>29</sup> As we will see, expectation often attempted to dictate reality but it did not necessarily reflect it.

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<sup>28</sup> See Denys Turner, "Why did Denys the Carthusian write *Sermones ad Saeculares?*," in this volume.

<sup>29</sup> See Brian Patrick McGuire, "*Shining Forth like the Dawn*": Jean Gerson's Sermon to the Carthusians," in this volume.

These two examples of what makes for a contemplative life demonstrates how different the monastic life could be perceived. Denys the Carthusian claimed that the writing of sermons was a Carthusian's duty, and Jean Gerson defined what Carthusian life should be, and it did not include pastoral concerns—rather, it was one of solitude in contemplation of God. However, one would assume that the place to discover the actual Carthusian ideal in regard to the active and contemplative lives would be in sermons written by Carthusians for Carthusians. But a preliminary study of the Mainz chapterhouse sermons has shown that the scant evidence revealed in such extant sermons unfortunately does not shed much light on what the Carthusians believed and felt about these matters.<sup>30</sup> Further investigation of other such sermons might turn up whether most Carthusians would side with Jean Gerson or Denys the Carthusian.<sup>31</sup>

*The cura monialium in Germany and England*

Perceptions of monastic life are contained in sermons which were at the very heart of monastic edification and spiritual formation. While such preaching was often conveyed in Latin to monks, vernacular sermons were the mainstay for the spiritual education of nuns. In German convents during the later middle ages, ample evidence demonstrates that nuns not only heard vernacular sermons preached to them by their confessors, but often read vernacular sermons to themselves.<sup>32</sup> Conversely, there is very little extant material for the study of sermons heard by nuns in England in the late middle ages.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, like the sermons directed to German nuns, in England preaching to the nuns was done in the vernacular. However, this similarity between the English and German nuns does not go much further. The role of English nuns was more passive in that it appears that they did not read sermons to themselves. These divergent experiences of female monastic life

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<sup>30</sup> See James Hogg, "Early fifteenth-century Chapterhouse Sermons at the Charterhouse of Mainz," article in this volume.

<sup>31</sup> See APPENDIX III in James Hogg's article where a previously unpublished list of manuscripts which contain Carthusian sermons is provided.

<sup>32</sup> See Schiewer, "Sermons for Nuns of the Dominican Observance Movement," (see note 7).

<sup>33</sup> See V.M. O'Mara, "Preaching to nuns in Late Medieval England," in this volume.

invite further study to discover in what ways monastic preaching and educational processes differed from region to region and convent to convent. In any event, the German nuns' reading of pastoral literature indicates how varied situations could be in regard to experiencing a sermon—sermons could be read by women in solitude with no mediator.

*Preaching by Italian nuns and hermits*

Other patterns of medieval monastic preaching can be found in Italian examples from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Humility of Faenza's exhortatory words which were directed to her monastic community were called *sermones*.<sup>34</sup> Although various influential writers and compilers often stressed the argument that women had no right to preach, at no point is she perceived as transgressing her role as abbess, nun, and woman.<sup>35</sup> She is viewed as mystical edifier. Furthermore, it may seem surprising that hermits played a great role in pastoral care and, in particular, in preaching.<sup>36</sup> The hermits Peter of the Morrone and John Buoni often preached to their local communities.<sup>37</sup> The intimacy that these hermit preachers shared with many locals underlines the

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<sup>34</sup> Mooney, "Authority and Inspiration in the *Vitae* and Sermons of Humility of Faenza," (see note 6).

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Aquinas (†1274) addressed the question whether or not a woman had the charism of wisdom in speech and knowledge such as pertains to man. Citing Proverbs 4:3, "I was an only-begotten in the sight of my mother; she taught," he replies: *Speech can be used in two ways. In one way privately, to one or a few, in familiar conversation. In this way the grace of speech becomes a woman. The other way publicly, addressing oneself to the whole Church. This is not conceded to women. First and principally, because of the condition of the female sex, which must be subject to man, according to Genesis. But to teach and persuade publicly in Church is not the task of subjects but of prelates. Men, when commissioned, can far better do this work, because their subjection is not from nature and sex as with women, but from something supervening by accident. Secondly, lest men's minds be enticed to lust. Thus Ecclesiasticus, (9:11): Many have been misled by a woman's beauty. By it passion is kindled like a fire. Thirdly, because generally speaking women are not perfected in wisdom so as to be fit to be entrusted with public teaching.* Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae: 171–8, trans. and ed. Roland Potter, vol. 45 (Blackfriars, 1970) q.177, art.2, 133. Although this was a common notion, women did preach in the middle ages. For various examples of women preaching in the middle ages see, Beverly M. Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker, eds. *Women Preaching in the Christian Tradition* (Berkeley, 1998).

<sup>36</sup> Giles Constable, "Eremitical forms of monastic life," in *Monks, Hermits and Crusaders in Medieval Europe*, 240–64, at 244–7.

<sup>37</sup> George Ferzoco, "Preaching by Thirteenth-Century Italian Hermits," in this volume.



active and rather social role they played as holy men. Although *vitae* and canon law texts do not dwell on these preaching examples, other contemporary sources such as processes of canonization indicate the frequency of these types of pastoral events.<sup>38</sup> Such sources need to be further examined to discover if this sort of preaching was widespread.

*Preaching by and against the Cathars*

Examples of medieval monastic preaching can be found in the pastoral activities of heretical "monks"<sup>39</sup> and orthodox nuns,<sup>40</sup> that is, in the preaching of the Cathars, and of the Benedictine nun Hildegard of Bingen. Although the two examples provided are from different traditions, that is one is heretical and the other orthodox, there are similarities found in both practices. In each case the influence of preaching is dependent on the way one lives one's life. The practice of an ascetic life by the "good men" and "good women" of the Cathar faith bestowed upon them an authority to be respected, which included a reverence toward their preaching. Hildegard of Bingen's prophetic authority, which was reflective of an ascetic and holy life, led to the rare occurrence of a nun being sought out to preach in public. The authority of the prophetess was usually left hidden behind closed doors to be spoken and diffused through the mouths of the clergy.<sup>41</sup> But with the extraordinary example of Hildegard of Bingen, that was not the case. These sorts of preaching events that either spoke in favor of or against heretical groups are seldom studied. But the nature of this

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> See John Arnold, "The preaching of the Cathars," article in this volume. I have labeled Cathars as "heretical monks". This is based on particular studies that view some Cathar beliefs and practices as reminiscent of the earliest forms of Christian monasticism. Anne Brenon states: *Il faut ici noter que, justement, les premières manifestations d'un monachisme chrétien—au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle, avant saint Basile et autour de lui—se situent dans une perspective d'encratisme et d'emphasis des dons du Saint Esprit, la perfection de vie, étant le signe de la validité de ce don du Saint Esprit, thème alors déjà récurrent. Jean Duvernoy a encore une fois été le premier à proposer un parallèle entre chrétiens cathares et moines basilien. N'y aurait-il pas convergence, chez nos Bon Chrétiens médiévaux, d'un souvenir de monachisme ancien et d'une neuve vigueur monastique romane?* See Anne Brenon, "Les fonctions sacramentelles du consolament," *Heresis* 20 (1993) 33–50, at 50.

<sup>40</sup> Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard" (see note 6.)

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of this sort of occurrence see Claire Sahlin, "The Prophetess as Preacher: Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophecy," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 40 (1997) 29–44.

type of preaching needs to be analyzed more fully in order to understand, among other things, how language and the reputation of certain preachers could influence others to either condemn or embrace particular beliefs and practices.

### *Preaching monastic reform*

Monastic preaching not only constitutes sermons preached by monks and nuns, but also sermons preached to monastic audiences as seen in the case of Jean Gerson's sermon mentioned above. The secular clergy often preached to such communities indicating their expectations of how monastic life should be lived. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed numerous clerical reformers who articulated their view of how the ideal Christian church should be structured. Two thirteenth-century church reformers, Jacques de Vitry<sup>42</sup> and Robert Grosseteste,<sup>43</sup> tried to influence and to shape the spiritual contours of monasticism. The concerns of both reformers mirrored the concerns of papal reform as realized by popes Innocent III and Gregory IX. With papal policy at the fore of ideas, the ideal of monasticism is seen through the eyes of these two reformers as contemplative and prayerful. Further analysis of what other clerics preached on the matter would shed more light on the nature of this reform and the way reforming ideas were disseminated.

Jacques de Vitry and Robert Grosseteste, however, put forward an ideal of monasticism which was quite different to the monastic ethos found in England in the later middle ages.

### *Benedictine preaching in England*

Benedictine preaching in late medieval England appears to have not been an unusual occurrence. Books and practical training point to the occurrences of monastic preaching on a rather large scale.<sup>44</sup> The wider Christian community expected pastoral care to be carried out by monks; and this expectation was perhaps not an

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<sup>42</sup> See Bird, "The Religious's Role in a Post-Fourth-Lateran World," (see note 27).

<sup>43</sup> Ginther, "Monastic Ideals and Episcopal Visitations," (see note 27).

<sup>44</sup> See Joan Greatrex, "Benedictine Sermons: Preparation and Practice in the English Monastic Cathedral Cloisters," article in this volume.

anomaly but a norm. All monks, therefore, did not perceive themselves as contemplatives who stayed within the cloister lest they perish; rather, there were some monks who were actively involved in the pastoral instruction of the Christian community outside of the cloister.<sup>45</sup> In fact, the research of Greatrex and Horner point to a rather deep involvement on the part of monks in pastoral care. In order to ascertain the full extent of this involvement further investigations need to be made of the sermons that were once housed in monastic libraries.

### *Cistercian preaching*

Although this volume puts forward many examples of monastic preaching that one might define as surprising, a sermon preached by a monk in the cloister to his brethren is, of course, equally indicative of medieval monastic preaching. Examples of Cistercian preaching, and in particular Bernard of Clairvaux's pastoral instruction, highlight what might be considered the classic form of monastic preaching—cloistered, spiritual, timeless, and inspiring.<sup>46</sup> Bernard's sermons are richly textured spiritual poetics indicating, to some degree, the profundity of the actual experience of hearing him preach. Although the experience is irretrievable, its elusiveness becomes less pronounced when we detect within his sermons familial elements that indicate the friendship and community that existed among this monastic preacher and his confreres. Through the reading of such sermons, a more tangible realization emerges of what preaching was like in a medieval Cistercian house.

The liturgical drama played out throughout the Cistercian year echoes in Bernard's sermons, bringing past into the present and future into the past.<sup>47</sup> This spiritual resonance is most clearly heard in Bernard's *Sermons on the Songs of Songs*. The preaching experience ties the monastic community together in the unfolding

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<sup>45</sup> See Patrick J. Horner, "Benedictines and Preaching the *Pastoralia* in Late Medieval England: A Preliminary Inquiry," in this volume.

<sup>46</sup> See Holdsworth, "Were the Sermons of St Bernard on the Song of Songs ever Preached?"; M.B. Pranger, "Killing Time: An Essay on the Monastic Notion of Speed;" and Chrysogonus Waddell, "The Liturgical Dimension of Twelfth-Century Cistercian Preaching." All in this volume.

<sup>47</sup> See Pranger, "Killing Time," (see note 46).

of salvific history where past, present, future, and eternity are realized within the life of Christ, played out in the liturgical year.<sup>48</sup>

The conclusions and observations offered here on Cistercian preaching indicate that even the more studied aspects of monastic culture continue to present new insights which clarify the cloistered way of life.

### *Conclusion*

We have reports of hermits, heretical monks, and nuns preaching. These are areas we must pay heed to in order to understand the fuller picture of medieval communication. To rely on a few sources to define medieval preaching imparts a particular and singular definition. But as the scholars in this volume demonstrate so clearly, preaching is a polyvalent term; a term that has perhaps been hijacked by a few sources, for if we were to treat the aforementioned texts by Gratian and Alan of Lille as being entirely normative and definitive of this issue, the assorted modes of medieval preaching illuminated in this study would have remained concealed. A more in-depth examination of monastic preaching will hold abundant insight into how pastoral instruction shaped the religious conduct of generations of monks and nuns, and how monks and nuns, through their own preaching, influenced the community within and outside the cloister.

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<sup>48</sup> See Waddell, "The Liturgical Dimension of Twelfth-century Cistercian Preaching," (see note 46).

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**PART TWO**

**CARTHUSIAN PREACHING**



WHY DID DENYS THE CARTHUSIAN WRITE  
*SERMONES AD SAECULARES*?

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Denys the Carthusian (c.1402–71) wrote some 900 model sermons. That simple statement of fact provokes a number of questions. First, why would a monk write sermons at all? And if the essays in this volume provide many an answer to that question as of monks generally, those answers cannot be assumed to explain why a Carthusian monk would write sermons. Being one of the most notably reclusive of all the monastic orders of the middle ages, the Carthusians were devoted to the contemplative as distinct from the active life to which preaching was traditionally assigned. This is a consideration which still weighs even if one notes the increasing tendency in the late middle ages for Carthusian houses to be situated in urban sites, and, therefore, theoretically to be more in touch with the secular and practical preoccupations of the church than the older houses located in the traditional “desert”.

In any event, it might be thought unsurprising for a Carthusian to write model sermons were they merely formal experiments in a well-trying and well-accepted genre of theological writing, or if intended for delivery, were they directed *ad religiosos* for delivery in chapter, for example. In view of which, let us note that while approximately half of Denys’s 900 sermons could be classified in those terms, half at least could not because they are *sermones ad saeculares* which are directed to the secular clergy. Although the sermons are addressed explicitly to the clergy involved in pastoral care, these sermons were written with the laity in mind because Denys indicates to the preacher the type of audience to whom the sermon is to be directed. In this sense these *sermones ad saeculares* are very similar to *sermones ad status*, that is, sermons intended for various social groups.

Denys’s 900 sermons are divided into four parts: there are two collections of *sermones de tempore* (one is directed *ad saeculares* and



the other is directed *ad religiosos*); and there are two collections of *sermones de sanctis* (again, one is *ad saeculares* and the other *ad religiosos*).<sup>1</sup> Of course, Denys's *ad saeculares* sermons were not to be delivered by him.<sup>2</sup> But they were far from being mere literary experiments in a theological genre; these *ad status*-like sermons were explicitly intended as models for a real use by preaching friars and secular clergy.

In addition to the fact that Denys wrote these *sermones ad saeculares* addressed, in essence, to the laity, it is also perplexing that he wrote so many sermons in general. A part of the explanation is that Denys's literary output overall is in any case truly prodigious. He far outstrips Augustine in productivity, if hardly in theological quality; his works in the modern edition constitute some forty-eight thousand columns in forty-two volumes,<sup>3</sup> and, on a rough calculation, amount to more than eighteen million words. One has to say, as a general comment about Denys's writings that they do rather go on and on. So, it might be said that 900 sermons is about par for his obsessively verbose course. The point, however, cuts both ways, since it is hard to see why Denys would want to fit such an enormous output of a theological genre, normally marginal to a monk's vocation, into a schedule of writing which contained so many other genres more appropriate to his contemplative way of life. Either way, we are still left with the problem: why did he do it?

It is true that Denys the Carthusian is the last omniscient theologian—he made serious contributions to every available theological form and on every conceivable theological topic. He wrote a scholastic commentary on the *Sentences*, a typical monastic commentary on every book of scripture, *expositiones* on all of the

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<sup>1</sup> The sermons appear in Denys the Carthusian, *Doctoris Ecstatici D. Dionysii Cartusiani Opera omnia*, ed. Carthusians, 42 tomes in 44 (Montreuil-sur-Mer, Tournai, Parkminster, 1896-1913, 1935). For the *Sermones de tempore*, see Tomes 29 and 30, vols. 1 and 2 (Tournai, 1905). For the *Sermones de sanctis* see Tomes 31 and 31, vols. 1 and 2 (Tournai, 1906).

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the difficulty in determining the relationship between the written model sermon and the preached sermon see Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "The Typology of the Medieval Sermon," in eds., Jacqueline Hamesse and Xavier Hermand, *De l'homélie au sermon: Histoire de la prédication médiévale. Actes du Colloque internationale de Louvain-la-Neuve (9-11 juillet 1992)*. Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales, Textes, Études, Congrès 14 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993) 83-101, at 87.

<sup>3</sup> See note 1.

works of the Pseudo-Dionysius, formal treatises on philosophical, ecclesiological, political, and ascetical topics, determinations of questions of canon law, polemics against ecclesiastical abuses particularly among clergy and bishops, hundreds of letters, pious dialogues, and manuals of moral theology, as well as his 900 sermons. Moreover, a huge proportion of his non-biblical writings have a practical, pastoral purpose of one kind or another. As to the sermons themselves, they are by no means the only form in which he offered preaching materials to the wider church. His massive *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* is not principally a speculative work of moral theology—unusual from the pen of a Carthusian—but a classification of moral *exempla* and an outline of the moral life divided into sections *ad status* explicitly intended for preaching purposes. The homiletic purpose is evident and in continuity with the tradition of popular moral *summas* of preceding centuries such as that of John of Freiburg (†1314). Denys himself comments in the prologue to his *Summa* that he does not propose to speak with scholastic subtlety, but with that religious simplicity, monastic devotion and fervor, which will serve an audience of lay people and common folk.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, in addition to *sermones ad saeculares*, Denys composed a large number of treatises *ad status*. These treatises *ad status* include: on the way of life of the parish priest, and of married people; on the life and rule to be followed by canons, archdeacons, princes, nobility, rulers, soldiers, bishops, virgins, widows, merchants, and on the education of young boys;<sup>5</sup> and this does not include his *ad religiosos* instructions for monks, nuns, solitaries, and friars. These *ad status* texts attest to the fact that Denys the Carthusian had an interest in the active life of preaching to the secular clergy and to the laity which is unusual for a monk of a strictly contemplative order. Considering the abundant literary production by this one Carthusian monk, perhaps it is not

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<sup>4</sup> Denys the Carthusian, *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus*, Liber 1, art. 1, in *Opera minora*, Tome 39, vol. 7 (Tournai, 1910) 15D–A: *De quibus omnibus ac consimilibus incidentes loqui propono non secundum scholasticam subtilitatem, sed (quantum spiritus sanctus dare dignabitur) secundum religiosam simplicitatem, monasticam devotionem, et sanctae dilectionis fervorem, prout amplius communisque populi informationem, emendationem, inflammationem atque profectum.*

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Denys the Carthusian, *De doctrina et regulis vitae Christianorum libri duo*, in *Opera minora*, Tome 39, vol. 7 (Tournai, 1910) 499–572, and the entire contents of *Opera minora* vol. 6 (Tournai, 1909).

surprising that Denys's superiors demanded an explanation for his copious output. And luckily for us, he gave one.

## II

Sometime in the year 1446, an inquiry was set up by the Carthusian general chapter into complaints against Denys as a result of which he felt compelled to write a letter of protest to his prior defending his scholarly and literary activities. It is not clear exactly why this inquiry was initiated. Another, unnamed, member of his community was involved in the same disciplinary process, but, speculating on the basis of the substance and of the tone of his letter of protest to his superior,<sup>6</sup> Denys's offense appears to have been no more lurid than that of engaging in a level of scholarly activity deemed by his superior to be excessive and incompatible with his vocation as a contemplative monk. He maintains that his writing activity is a work of piety needed if he is to endure in freedom of spirit the long periods of solitude and silence which characterize the daily routine of the Carthusian monk.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps here there is an implicit appeal to the order's *Customs*, codified in the twelfth century by the prior of La Grande Chartreuse, Guigo I. The *Customs* specifically ordained that the monks should engage in the writing of books as well as in manual labor because, as they state,

We preach with our hands, because we may not do it by word of mouth.<sup>8</sup>

Denys goes on to record the sources he has used in his studies, the breadth of which is remarkable in any terms, but for a late medieval Carthusian it is particularly striking. As well as listing all the main Fathers of the church, Greek and Latin, and a vast repertoire of medieval authorities both in theology and in canon law, he refers with no less enthusiasm to a long line of pagan philosophers, not only from the classical Greek period of Plato and Aristotle, but through the late antique schools of pagan thought to

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<sup>6</sup> Denys the Carthusian, *Protestatio ad superiorem suum*, in *Opera omnia*, Tome 1, lxxi-lxxii.

<sup>7</sup> *Fecit etiam libentius me manere in solitudine. Protestatio*, lxxii.

<sup>8</sup> Guigo I, *Consuetudines*, 28, 2-4, in  *Coutumes des Chartreuses, Sources chrétiennes 313*, ed. and trans., a Carthusian [M. Laporte] (Paris, 1984) 225: ... *ut quia ore non possumus, dei verbum manibus predicemus*.

nearly all the medieval Jewish and Arab philosophers and theologians.

One obvious reason why his superiors might have taken exception to all this scholarly activity is severely practical: Denys's monastery was small and ill-equipped in library resources. To have read all this source material required extensive use of the medieval equivalent of an "inter-library loan" system, as notoriously expensive and administratively bothersome then as, comparatively speaking, it is today. Indeed, Denys remarks that nearly all his letter-writing output—which was quite vast but now lost—was devoted to the acquisition of manuscripts unavailable to him in Roermond. The disruption of the monastic routine involved in the borrowing and sending of manuscripts, as well as the costs of receiving, copying, and returning them to their owners, must have been considerable. One might speculate about an element of resentment, for in a small community not otherwise known for its scholarship, his less literary brethren may very well have seen Denys's scholarly activity as more the symptom of personal obsessions and ambitions than the fulfillment of that obscure, anonymous, and humble way of life which was the Carthusian vocation. At any rate, there is a suggestion that he might have been accused of such unworthy motives because in his letter of defense he protests that he is unaware of any such low motive of vanity or desire for fame in himself.<sup>9</sup>

In any case, there is no doubt that Denys's literary activity was very untypical of Carthusian life in the fifteenth century on at least two counts: as to its quantity, and as to its range of theological interests. But there was a third count which was almost certainly the most provoking, namely the highly speculative character of his theology and his unswerving commitment to an "intellectualist" as opposed to "voluntarist" conception of the contemplative life. On the first of these counts, Denys was vulnerable to the disapproval of his superiors on disciplinary grounds because too much of his daily *horarium* was occupied with scholarly activity to the neglect of other duties of his vocation, particularly since we know that he wrote everything in his own hand, making no use of any *amanuenses*. But on the second and third counts, that is, his

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<sup>9</sup> *Protestatio*, lxxi: ... *non sum mihi conscius quod ex aliqua vanitate, vel propter finem vilissimum, scilicet propter famam ... exercitium istud assumpserim vel prosequi optem.*

enthusiasm for producing preaching materials and his intellectualist predilections, there were wider, more fundamental, and less personal issues at stake. These issues brought Denys into direct conflict with the prevailing spiritual dispositions of fifteenth-century Carthusians in northern Europe. If the prestige of the Carthusian in the fifteenth century was comparatively high, it was largely on the score of personal piety and ascetical rigor that they deserved it. On the whole, the influence of the Carthusians in the late middle ages is not associated with theological scholarship. In fact, the Carthusians' output is usually associated with the transmission of work of solid, practical piety that contains a rather intensely anti-intellectualist reaction to speculative theology that was found in the universities and the northern European schools of speculative mysticism. The belief that monks should not participate in teaching outside the cloister was one that had prevailed for centuries. Hugh of St Victor (†1141), for all his enthusiasm for learning, had nonetheless declared that:

The monk's philosophy consists in the simplicity of his life. You will say, "but I wish to teach others". It is not your business to teach, but to weep. But if you desire to be a teacher, listen to what you must do. It is with your workaday dress, with the simplicity of your face, with the innocence of your life and with the holiness of your dealings with people that you must teach them.<sup>10</sup>

Denys himself frequently cites this *obiter dictum* of Hugh's and with approval: he even does so, self-consciously and defensively, in his letter of protest to his prior.<sup>11</sup>

Nonetheless he was caught in a dilemma, in a convergence of conflicting pressures which appeared to threaten his personal understanding of his monastic vocation. These pressures were brought to a head of crisis for him by the inquiry of 1446. Principal among these was the conflict between the scholarly learning of the Christian and the vocation to personal piety which was the central demand of his Carthusian and monastic vocation. But there were others closely related to it. There was his enthusiasm for the mystical theology of his compatriot, Jan van Ruusbroec (†1381),

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<sup>10</sup> *Didascalicon*, V, 8, PL 176, 796: *Simplicitas monachi philosophia eius est. Sed docere, inquis, alios volo. Non est tuum docere, sed plangere. Si tamen doctor esse desideras, audi quid facias. Utilitas habitus tui, et simplicitas vultus, innocentia vitae, et sanctitas conversationis tuae docere debent homines.*

<sup>11</sup> *Protestatio*, lxxi: ... *quia monachus sum, cuius est lugere et illuminari, potiusquam docere vel illuminare.*

who indeed had Carthusian supporters and friends in the fourteenth century. However, by the fifteenth century, Carthusians had fallen under the influence of Ruusbroec's posthumous arch-enemy, Jean Gerson (†1429), whose almost willfully uncomprehending polemic against Ruusbroec's supposed "autotheism" was conducted most systematically in the form of letters to Carthusian superiors.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the influence of Gerson's "affectivist" or "voluntarist" reading of the Pseudo-Dionysius, taken together with that of the thirteenth-century Carthusian, Hugh of Balma (and indirectly that of the Victorine Thomas Gallus) was almost total on fifteenth-century Carthusians. Denys, however, is a lone dissenting voice within his own order on an issue which was increasingly tied up with the understanding of the Carthusian vocation itself—that of the primacy of intellect or will in the formal constitution of the act of contemplation.<sup>13</sup> Nor could the theological issue be separated from the disciplinary issue of how Denys was to live out the day-to-day practice of his Carthusian vocation. Indeed, Kent Emery has argued that:

It is Denys's rigorously intellectualist teaching on contemplation ... and the huge intellectual preparation it approves, that are the source of his tensions in the order.<sup>14</sup>

Given, therefore, that he was in so many ways laying himself open to the disapproval of his order, it is scarcely any wonder that Denys is defensive about his frequent transgressions across the boundary traditionally laid down between the contemplative and the active lives. Nor is it surprising that he is defensive of his engagement in so prolific an activity of service to preaching, particularly since so much of his output in this genre was intended for preaching to lay people.

For though Denys compiled his sermon collection in 1451–2<sup>15</sup>—that is, after the inquiry into his writing had exonerated him

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<sup>12</sup> Jean Gerson, *Epistola prima ad fratrem Bartholomaeum*, in Palémon Glorieux, *Oeuvres complètes* 8: 615–635; *Epistola secunda ad Bartholomaeum*, *Op. cit.* 790–804.

<sup>13</sup> Denys engages with Hugh of Balma and Gerson in *De contemplatione*, Liber 3, art. 3, 257–8; Liber 3, art. 14, 269–70; and Liber 3, art. 15, 270–4, in Tome 41, *Opera minora*, vol. 9 (Tournai, 1912).

<sup>14</sup> Kent Emery, Jr., "Twofold Wisdom and Contemplation in Denys of Rykel (Dionysius Cartusiensis, 1402–1471)," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 18 (1988) 99–134, at 107.

<sup>15</sup> Which is not to say that he wrote them all in that year.

—the defense of his preaching and pastoral interests dates back before 1446, in fact it dates from the beginning of his literary career, and it is always defensive in tone. On the other hand, it is never merely an *ad hominem* argument. Although Denys knows he has a case to answer and a justification to give to his superiors for his untypical lifestyle and interests, his arguments in justification of them are systematic, never mere rationalizations of personal priorities.

Moreover, they are deeply rooted in the soil of a distinctive conception of the contemplative life itself for which he gives profound philosophical and theological arguments. And there is, as may now be observed, a very fundamental and by no means contingent reason why he needs them. Indeed, the question why Denys wrote all those sermons is shifted from the particularities of his problem with his Carthusian superiors on to the highest theological plane by the consideration of his intellectualist view of contemplation; for what, from one point of view, consisted in tensions between Denys and his order, from another consisted in tensions within his own thought. Had Denys's theological disposition been more in accord with the temper of the Carthusians of his day—that is, more pietistic, devotional, affectivist—and had his desire for the reform of ecclesiastical and lay morals been motivated by the reforming instincts of the more anti-intellectualist tendencies within the *devotio moderna*, one might more easily be able to find a consistency between his vocation to contemplation and his whole-hearted engagement with preaching. But what explains the consistency of this monk's devotion to the work of sermon production given his so rigorously intellectualist conception of contemplation? The question of why he, a contemplative monk, wrote so much practical work is made the more acute in view of the especially, and for his day, uncharacteristically speculative account of the contemplative life. Denys faced this question openly and explicitly, and if the occasion was provided only by pressures from within his order, the answer was, nevertheless, systematic and sustained. Let us take that argument in steps, reconstituting it from various sources in his output, ignoring chronology, and setting it out systematically.

## III

First, as to the importance of preaching itself, Denys the Carthusian constantly appeals to a text in the *Celestial Hierarchy* of his favorite theologian, the Pseudo-Dionysius, to show the significance of preaching. In 1453—shortly after the completion of his sermon cycles—in praise of his friend, the celebrated Franciscan preacher Joannes Brugman (†1473) for whom he compiled a manual summarizing the duties of each Christian state,<sup>16</sup> he cites the following passage from the *Celestial Hierarchy*:

The most divine of all divine [activities] is to cooperate with the Creator, glorious above all glories, exalted and omnipotent, in the drawing of souls back to him.<sup>17</sup>

In the preface to his *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* he significantly implies that this activity of drawing sinners to God stands nearer to Mary's side of the distinction between contemplation and action than to Martha's:

It is for this reason possible to say that it is more pleasing to Christ, and does him more honor and reverence, if a person through tactful encouragement, virtuous example, and fitting witness recalls souls to him when they have been deceived by the devil's wiles, than does Martha, who served Christ in the body while he still trod this earth, or do Nicodemus and Joseph, who laid his dead body in his venerable tomb ... It is for that [reason] that the teachers and preachers are given their aureole.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, as to his own relation to the preaching mission of the church, Denys tells us in the same work:

Therefore, since it is so God-like, salvific, and meritorious to instruct, to exhort, to correct, to convert, and to save others by means of preaching, I, who, on account of the order in which I am professed am enclosed and may not go out, nor have a license to preach, for as little as I can do these things by speaking, all the more do I desire to do them by writing, collating, and compiling.

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<sup>16</sup> *De doctrina et regulis vitae Christianorum*, 499–572 (see note 5 for full details).

<sup>17</sup> *Celestial Hierarchy*, 3, 165B.

<sup>18</sup> *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus*, 14D–A (Tournai, 1910): *Sic dicere possumus, quod gratiorem Christo obsecutionem reverentiamque impendit, qui exhortatione benigna, virtuoso exemplo, documentis idoneis, ad ipsum revocat animas diabolica fraude deceptas, quam Martha, quae Christum adhuc ambulanti in terris corpore pavit, vel Nicodemus et Joseph, qui corpus eius exanime tradiderunt venerabili sepulturae. Hinc demum doctoribus ac praedicatoribus datur aureola ...*



This I do whenever I can, compiling sermons for the year, *de tempore* and *de sanctis*, both for seculars and for religious; what is more, I have been almost forced to add to them this work, being pressed very hard to do so at the instance of a learned, religious, and zealous man of the order of St Francis, a close neighbor of mine in worldly terms, but very much closer spiritually; thereby I hope to share in the fruit of his lips, if by any chance he may be helped in some small way by means of this work ...<sup>19</sup>

Of course, it was quite possible for Denys to give a general and uncontentious justification of a contemplative's concern for the preaching work of the church. Traditionally, the contemplative vocation was seen as justified in its disengagement from this practical work by the support which it gave by means of unceasing prayer. And in his less consciously self-justifying moods, Denys rehearses these arguments and leaves the matter at that,<sup>20</sup> merely adding that those who seek with all their powers to give honor to God in the contemplative life will "win the grace of conversion for many" simply by so doing; in fact they "may happen to merit more than many preachers do".<sup>21</sup>

But Denys wants to justify a far more active and direct involvement in preaching than simply support by prayer. Indeed, as he sees it, what is at stake is his Carthusian vocation itself; but as his superiors see it, Denys's direct interest in preaching is not compatible with that vocation's contemplative and eremitical character such as his superiors believe it to be. Therefore, thirdly, Denys proposes to define the contemplative life, and then justify it, in a way which is distinctly novel. This he does in his chief systematic work on the subject, his *De contemplatione*, written in the five year period immediately preceding the investigation of 1446.

Denys begins where the Western tradition begins, in Augustine's distinction between the contemplative and active lives in *The*

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<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, 15B-C: *Itaque, quum tam deiforme, salubre ac meritorium sit alios praedicando instruere, exhortari, corripere, convertere et salvare; ego qui ex religione quam professus sum, clausus sum nec egredi valeo, nec praedicandi privilegium habeo, quanto minus haec facere queo loquendo, tanto plus ea opto scribendo, colligendo, dictando. Quod equidem utcumque pro viribus iam effeci, compilando sermones per annum de Tempore et de Sanctis, tam pro saecularibus quam pro religiosis: attamen ista adjicere quasi compellor, utpote instantissime ad hoc rogatus a viro erudito, religioso ac fervido Ordinis S. Francisci, secundum carnem propinquiori, sperans particeps inveniri fructus laborum illius, si forte ex isto opusculo potuerit aliquantulum adiuvare ...*

<sup>20</sup> See *De laude et commendatione vitae solitariae*, art. 31, in Tome 38, *Opera minora*, vol. 6 (Tournai, 1909) 370A-C.

<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, a. 33, 370C-D: ... *quod agendo promerebitur multis gratiam conversionis, et plus forsitan merebitur quam plurimi praedicantes.*

*City of God*, 19.19, and with the subsequent developments of this teaching in Gregory the Great and Thomas Aquinas. He is in agreement with this tradition on at least some central points: that the contemplative life differs from the active life in respect of its end, for the end of the contemplative life is not any “external work”, but is “a translucent knowledge of the truth formed [by charity]”;<sup>22</sup> whereas the “immediate and proper end [of the active life] is an output or exterior action”.<sup>23</sup> Following Aquinas, he agrees furthermore that the active life consists in those pursuits whose purpose is to secure the necessities of human existence. But he immediately qualifies this by saying that this holds only in respect of the “immediate and proper” end of the active life because ultimately he insists that:

The pursuits of the active life in their final end must be directed also to the same end of the contemplative life, above all to that knowledge of the truth which is had in heaven, and is the beatific vision ...<sup>24</sup>

For Denys, this distinction between the immediate and formal end of the active life and its ultimate end is no mere technicality. He is conscious of an ambiguity in the traditional way of distinguishing the two which is not clarified, or even noticed, by the leading authorities on whom he draws—Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Aquinas. It was the convention to argue that this distinction is founded in the fact that, all agreed, Martha’s works of the active life begin and end in this life (*in via*), whereas Mary’s work of contemplation begins in this life, but has no terminus except in the beatific vision itself in heaven (*in patria*). It was from these grounds that the superiority of the contemplative over the active life was commonly argued. We should note, however, that Aquinas, clearer than most in this as in so much else, is careful to distinguish that while contemplative activity is higher than active, as far as whole lifestyles are concerned, the mixed life is superior to any which is constituted either by unmixed contemplation or by unmixed action.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *De contemplatione*, Liber 1, art. 11, 144B: *Una [vita] est contemplativa: cuius finis non est opus externum, sed ipsa veritatis sincera atque formata cognitio.*

<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit.*, 144C: *Alia [vita] est activa: cuius finis immediatus ac proprius est opus seu actio ipsa exterior.*

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, 145A–B: *... studia vitae activae cum fine suo ultimate referenda sunt utique ad finem vitae contemplativae, praesertim ad eam veritatis cognitionem quae habetur in patria, estque beatifica visio Dei ...*

<sup>25</sup> *Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae: 183–9, trans. and ed. Jordan Aumann, vol. 47

Denys has a problem both with the standard view of the active and the contemplative lives and with Aquinas's revisions of it. As to the proposition that the works of the active life derive none of their character from the ultimate end which they share with contemplation, Denys replies that this simply could not be so:

This [beatific] vision is the goal of all our work; and whatever thoughts we may have, whatever desires, whatever speech we utter, work we do or undergo, we must refer them to that [goal].<sup>26</sup>

Denys's reason for rejecting the standard manner of distinguishing action and contemplation as at least inadequate—and in part confused—is very fundamental: Denys clarifies by stating that the capacity of any action *in via* to win merit *in patria* lies in the degree of charity with which it is done and from which it proceeds. This holds of any action whatever, just as Paul had said, it is faith, hope, and charity which alone survive, and the greatest of them is charity (1 Cor. 13:13). Therefore, Denys is insistent that the same is true of contemplative action itself. Central to his theology of contemplation, or “mystical theology”, is the proposition that it is, at root, nothing but the possession of the highest degree of the gift of wisdom, which is inseparable from charity, and the degree of the one determines the degree of the other.<sup>27</sup> But, Denys adds that the works of the active life are meritorious only insofar as they too are the expressions of charity. Therefore, if what counts for the survival of the contemplative life *in patria* is that same charity in virtue of which active works are meritorious, then on that same account, the works of the active life must, insofar as they are meritorious by winning charity, survive *in patria* too.

It could be said that Denys misses the point of Aquinas's distinction. For as Aquinas distinguishes them, the active and the contemplative lives do not differ in respect of their goal. All authorities, including Denys himself, are agreed that there is only one goal of all human activity, contemplative or active, and that is the achievement of union with God in the beatific vision. The grounds on which the ancient authorities distinguished between the contemplative and active lives related to the nature of the means to achieve

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(Blackfriars, 1973) q.188, art.6, 202–7.

<sup>26</sup> *De contemplatione*, Liber 1, art. 11, 145B: *Nempe haec visio omnium exercitiorum nostrorum est finis; et quicquid cogitamus, appetimus, loquimur, operamur aut patimur, ad eum debemus referre.*

<sup>27</sup> *De contemplatione*, Liber 3, art. 10, 265–6.

that common goal. Broadly speaking, means to any end can be distinguished into two general kinds. Some means are such that though they are, as it were, causally productive of the end, they do not as activities possess any of the character of the end of which they are causally productive; for example, violence can be a means to the achievement of peace, or anger a means productive of reconciliation. But other means not only bring about the end they are a means to, but also in some measure share in the nature of the end that they bring about, and so are, to some degree, the end already achieved; for example, a felicitous joke is both means to and the embodiment of happiness. The same holds on the "classical" account of the distinction between the active and the contemplative life. The vision of God is the end of both: they are distinct as means, the active life being productive of the goal, but unlike it as work, whereas the end, the vision of God, is already present in the contemplative life itself, whose work is therefore already like the goal it achieves.

Denys argues that any work which merits the beatific vision must share in its character because charity is the cause of merit, and it is charity which survives and is constitutive of the happiness of the blessed in heaven. Hence, that which makes any action *in via*, whether contemplative or active, a means to the achievement of the beatific vision, is one and the same in either case. Therefore, if that in virtue of which the contemplative life shares in the character of what it merits is charity, then, by the same token the active works share in what they achieve, they too can merit only by charity. The distinction can therefore not be determined in terms of their nature as means, nor can it be determined in terms of their goals.

To this line of thought a Thomist could respond with a further distinction, and conceding all that Denys has put forward, argue that contemplation and action do not differ in respect of the charity which "remains", they do differ in their specific character as *genera* of action. What defines an action is not its goal (after all, the same goal of learning can be achieved by all sorts of different actions, as reading, listening, filing, or compiling); nor does an action define its character as means (for all sorts of different actions can have the same character as means); what defines an action is its object, as hearing is defined by sound as its object, reading by texts, or seeing by color. Furthermore, what holds for

actions holds for *genera* of actions, so that, as Aquinas and the "classical" view maintain, the objects of active works do differ from those of the contemplative. For the works of the active life all have the same character of being tied to conditions specific and exclusive to our earthly existence; they are the work of supplying for the pre-mortem needs of life. As actions, therefore, they cease with death. By contrast, the object of contemplative works transcends the necessities of our earthly existence and so contemplation is one and the same activity as that engaged in by the blessed in heaven. Hence, if the goal is the same (that is, the beatific vision), and if their efficacy as means derives from the same charity, the contemplative and the active lives nonetheless differ in the nature of their characterizing activities. This is so because what the contemplative does *in via* not only merits but is what the blessed do *in patria*; whereas though the active merits what the contemplative merits, what one does as active is not what one merits the right to do *in patria*, but something different.

Thus far, then, the difference between Aquinas and Denys seems largely terminological. A Thomistic distinction between the "end" and the "object" of an activity corresponds with that which Denys made in *De contemplatione* 1.11, between an activity's "ultimate" end and its "immediate and proper" end. But at this point Denys's argument takes a turn which is unusual if not unique. There are, he says, some actions characteristic of the active life *in via* which do continue as such *in patria*. Although there are some works of the active life such as feeding the hungry, and other corporal works of mercy which are of their nature contingent upon the conditions of our pre-mortem existence and arise out of its "necessities",<sup>28</sup> other works are not; and they are those which are especially close in their nature to contemplative activity itself, such as the hearing of confessions, teaching theology, and, significantly, preaching.<sup>29</sup> These works of the active life do, in some sort, survive *in patria*. We have it on the authority of the Pseudo-Dionysius, that such works, especially teaching and preaching, can be said to be the continuous activity of the higher ranks of angels in heaven because angelic work is to purify, illuminate, and perfect the lower orders. If, as was the commonly accepted view, these are the works of the active life, then manifestly such

<sup>28</sup> *De contemplatione*., Liber 1, art. 14, 150C-D.

<sup>29</sup> *De contemplatione*, Liber 1, art. 11, 145B.

works have their proper place in heaven.<sup>30</sup> Denys concludes that such teaching and preaching are a precondition of the full perfection of the contemplative life itself;<sup>31</sup> and he even reports that some believe that such a life is preferable to the contemplative:

Some say about these works that they are to be preferred to the contemplative life, which, in my view, is probably the correct understanding of the matter.<sup>32</sup>

These things being so, why does Denys reject Aquinas's conclusion that the "mixed" life-style is the best of all? It can be argued that he had personal reasons. Denys was probably already aware when writing *De contemplatione* of the sort of accusations which would be made formally against him a year or two later in 1446. It would have hardly served his case with the Carthusian order to rehearse an argument for the Dominican way of life. Besides, there is more than rationalization in his rejection of Aquinas's "mixed" life. His purpose in the end is to demonstrate that the pastoral concerns of the preacher are proper concerns of the contemplative pure and simple, not that there is a preaching way of life which falls somewhere between the contemplative and the active. His argument to this end rests, as he sees it, on a principled philosophical foundation,<sup>33</sup> or perhaps, on a distinctly essentialist prejudice: Denys the "essentialist" does not like "mixtures" on principle. The "mixed" life, as Aquinas conceives of it, is the life compounded out of the simple constituents of the active and the contemplative, in such a way that the distinct identities of both are fused in a third thing which is neither. But on philosophical principle, Denys argues that a thing which combines two simple essences achieves no essentiality of its own, no third *quidditas*, but is rather a "mixture". So it is with the contemplative and active lives. Each has its own *quidditas*. You can put the two together in

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<sup>30</sup> *De contemplatione*, Liber 1, art. 18, 154A–B. In fact Aquinas agrees that higher angels teach lower angels "about the mysteries of divine providence" (and by implication, therefore, that there are "active" works which survive *in patria*), without, however, drawing Denys's conclusion that the traditional distinction between the "active" and the "contemplative" lives therefore breaks down.

<sup>31</sup> *De contemplatione*, Liber 1, art. 14, 150D.

<sup>32</sup> *De contemplatione*, Liber 1, art. 14, 150A: *De his igitur actibus aliqui dicunt, quod vitae contemplativae sint praefерendi: quod secundum bonum intellectum probabile reor.*

<sup>33</sup> As Kent Emery does, see "Denys the Carthusian and the invention of preaching materials," *Viator* 25 (1994) 377–409, at 391.

varying proportions to get various mixes, but as with any mixture, one or other of the simples it is composed of will tend to predominate. Therefore, the element which predominates will determine the overall character of the whole and it will contain "virtually" the other. Or, as he puts it:

A middle term, or mixture, is made up of simple elements which stand at the extremes; and as such is contained virtually in them. For this reason, a life which is composed of elements of contemplation and of action is contained in both. But just as in mixtures one or the other of the simple elements is found in greater abundance, so too the life which consists in both is sometimes predominantly contemplative, sometimes predominantly active. Now the description of a life [one way or the other] is determined by what a person takes most pleasure in and principally intends ... Hence, those who principally intend the contemplation of truth are called "contemplatives".<sup>34</sup>

These arguments give Denys the conclusions that he needs. Remember what those needs are: in the narrowest version of them, those needs are to defend, within his own order, his own idiosyncratic version of the Carthusian way of life. He needs to defend his massive work of scholarly retrieval of the theological traditions. This he can do if, as against the prevailing influence on the Carthusians of the voluntarist and anti-intellectualist doctrines of Hugh of Balma and Jean Gerson, he can defend the proposition that contemplation as such is the gift of wisdom and so a work of intellect issuing from and driven by charity. That proposition in turn yields a conclusion about the *doctrina christiana* as a whole, which is not only Victorine and Augustinian in its sources, but wholly consistent with contemporary fashions in affectivist and popularly accessible forms of piety. This is so because it enables Denys to see all learning as having its formal purpose and goal in the service of charity. Therefore, distinctions between the contemplative and active lives, which would block the easy exchange between contemplation and preaching that came so naturally to Denys, could be pulled down consistently with the characteriza-

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<sup>34</sup> *De contemplatione*, Liber 1, art. 11, 145D-A: *Medium namque seu mixtum, sicut ex ipsis simplicibus atque ex extremis conficitur, ita in eis virtualiter continetur. Idcirco vita ex utroque compacta, sub contemplativa vita comprehenditur et activa. Sed sicut in mixtis aliquod simplicium praedominado abundat, ita in vita ex utroque composita interdum quidem abundat contemplativum, interdum autem activum. Porro actio in qua quis delectatur et cui maxime intendit, praecipue dicitur vita ipsius ... hinc qui principaliter veritatis speculationi intendunt, contemplativi vocantur.*

tion of his way of life as essentially contemplative and not, as for the preaching orders, "mixed". With these arguments, it is possible for him to defend consistently the specificity of preaching *ad status* to the laity—whose condition of life is active and therefore must be preached to as such—with his engaging in a role supportive of this preaching mission strictly as a Carthusian contemplative. And if I have offered a number of reasons why Denys might have had a personal interest in such a view of things, I am sure that he felt he had wider, more compellingly universal reasons for maintaining it. In view of his enormous output and the multiplicity of his sources, Denys is often judged as an eclectic compromiser, but not here in his conception of the relation between contemplation and preaching. In his view of this relationship there is a consistency and coherence which is not always to be found in the traditions built on greater minds than his. In any case, he evidently won the personal battle, for by 1451 he was compiling that collection of 900 sermons, with the approval, it seems, of his superiors. More is the pity, though, that he lost the historical war.

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“SHINING FORTH LIKE THE DAWN”:  
JEAN GERSON’S SERMON TO THE CARTHUSIANS

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Jean Gerson (1363–1429) has traditionally been known as a chancellor of the university of Paris and theologian who involved himself deeply in the conciliar process that ended the Great Schism.<sup>1</sup> In the last decades, however, Gerson’s talents as a preacher also have gained attention in scholarly circles.<sup>2</sup> Today it is possible to claim that the “consoling doctor” deserved this unusual title not only for his concern with penitents in the confessional but also for the sermons he gave in many different contexts: at court, for the university, at church synods and councils, and in his own parish church of Saint Jean-en-Grève.<sup>3</sup> Gerson invested a great amount of time and effort in these sermons, which were preached in both French and Latin.

In Gerson’s over one hundred sermons which have survived, we find only two that were preached to a monastic audience. Gerson was generally skeptical about monastic life in his time, especially for women, and he used every opportunity to encourage bishops to examine the monasteries in their dioceses.<sup>4</sup> But Gerson’s

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<sup>1</sup> The most complete twentieth-century biography remains *John Gerson: Reformer and Mystic* (Louvain, 1928). I have completed an English translation of several of Gerson’s works, with a full introduction to his life and thought, *Jean Gerson: Early Writings*, in the Classics of Western Spirituality series, published by Paulist Press, forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> See D. Catherine Brown, *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge, 1987), esp. ch. 2, “The Art of the Preacher”. Also Louis Mourin, *Jean Gerson, prédicateur français* (Bruges, 1952).

<sup>3</sup> The most recent edition of Gerson’s works is Palémon Glorieux, *Jean Gerson. Oeuvres Complètes*, 10 vols. (Paris, 1960–73). Glorieux worked too fast, and there are many problems with the edition, which nevertheless remains a point of departure for all work on Gerson. The Latin sermons are found in volume 5, *L’Oeuvre Oratoire* (1963); the French sermons are in volume 7.2 (1968). In what follows here, I abbreviate Glorieux to “Gl” and cite from volume and page number.

<sup>4</sup> As in his *Rememoratio agendorum durante subtractione* (Gl 6.111): *Sciatur status religionum tam virorum quam mulierum; ubi non dubium est quin multa et*

two sermons for monks reveal that he was willing to make exceptions. In preaching on the feast of St Bernard to the Cistercians, probably at the College of St Bernard in Paris, Gerson demonstrated a great affection for the primary Cistercian saint.<sup>5</sup> The chancellor took it for granted that the Cistercian fathers and brothers would want to follow in the footsteps of their great father, in moving from intellectual to affective knowledge. Making use of Bernard's life and writings, Gerson provided a portrait of an ideal monk scholar who had been a champion of church unity at a time of schism in the twelfth century. There was a need, Gerson insisted, for similar figures in the new schism: Bernard's courage and determination could guide the church in its present schism.

Bernard's writings permeate almost the whole of the Gersonian corpus.<sup>6</sup> It is therefore not surprising that Gerson on at least one occasion in his life sang the praises of the saint. Elsewhere I have shown that Gerson's Bernard is an individualistic figure seen outside of the context of monastic community.<sup>7</sup> Gerson had little interest in Bernard as the center of a group of men who loved each other and were each other's friends. Bernard in Gerson's mind could be church reformer and lonely mystic but not loving friend.

Similar themes of reform and mysticism permeate Gerson's other sermon to a monastic community. On the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin, 8 September, Gerson spoke to the Carthusians, perhaps at the Charterhouse of Vauvert in Paris.<sup>8</sup> It is not possible to date this sermon precisely, but it may belong to the period of feverish activity after Gerson returned to Paris from a self-imposed exile at Bruges.<sup>9</sup> In these years immediately after 1400, Gerson was

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*innumera sint reparanda, specialiter apud mulieres religiosas plures ...*

<sup>5</sup> See Gl 5.325–39, *Fulcite me floribus* [Song 2:5]. See my treatment of this sermon: "Gerson and Bernard: Languishing with Love," *Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses* 46 (1995) 127–56.

<sup>6</sup> See Glorieux's *Table des auteurs cités* (10.634) for references to Bernard. Glorieux did not get them all, as I found in translating Gerson and tracking down his sources.

<sup>7</sup> "Gerson and Bernard," (note 5 above) 154–6.

<sup>8</sup> *In Nativitate B. Mariae Virginis*, Gl 5.481–6.

<sup>9</sup> Gl 5.xv, indicates that the sermon could either have been delivered in 1402 at Vauvert or in 1419 at La Grande Chartreuse. So far as I have been able to determine, Gerson never visited La Grande Chartreuse, even though he had a standing invitation. See my "Loving the Holy Order: Jean Gerson and the Carthusians," in *Die Kartäuser und Ihre Welt-Kontakte und gegenseitige Einflüsse*, James Hogg, ed., *Analecta Cartusiana* 62.1 (Salzburg, 1993) 100–39, especially 134–6.

writing his central work on mystical theology. He was spending time and effort in defining the content and language of mystical as opposed to scholastic theology. It would thus have been appropriate for him to turn to the Carthusians in considering the solitude and meditation in their way of life, which was intended to be a preparation for contemplative union. It is likely, then, that the sermon belongs to the early years of the fifteenth century when Gerson was back at Paris, concerned with mystical theology, and therefore felt attracted to Carthusian life and writings.

Gerson's attention to the Carthusians points to the extraordinary development of a Paris academic who in his earlier years had chosen to express himself with anything but Christian charity. The clever humanist student of the 1380s and early 1390s had by the early 1400s become a convinced Christian intellectual, who insisted that knowledge and affectivity had to complement each other.<sup>10</sup> The Carthusians came to represent for Gerson a meeting place of all that he sought in his life, and his devotion to them grew as he became older.

The sermon in the form we have it is brief, under 2500 words, and is probably incomplete.<sup>11</sup> It exists only in a single manuscript, one of the many copied at St Victor in Paris in the mid-fifteenth century, at a time when there was great interest in preserving Gerson's work.<sup>12</sup> Considering Gerson's close connections with the Carthusians while he was in exile at Lyon in the 1420s it is perhaps surprising that there are not more copies via Carthusian houses, but the explanation may be the fact that Gerson never got around to finishing the sermon while he was at Paris and later dealt with the Carthusians not in sermons but via a series of letters that often turned into brief theological treatises.<sup>13</sup> In his last years, he resisted an invitation to visit the Grande Chartreuse and remained at Lyon. The original sermon would have remained untouched among the

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<sup>10</sup> "Loving the Holy Order," note 9 above, especially 103–9.

<sup>11</sup> This likelihood is not noted by Glorieux, but an earlier editor, Louis Ellies du Pin, *Johannes Gerson. Opera Omnia* 3 (1706; reprint, Hildesheim, 1987) 1360–4, pointed out that the sermon is incomplete in form.

<sup>12</sup> Danièle Calvot and Gilbert Ouy, *L'oeuvre de Gerson à Saint-Victor de Paris. Catalogue des manuscrits* (Paris, 1990). For the reception of Gerson's works at Paris after his death, p. 27. For the single manuscript of this sermon, p. 166.

<sup>13</sup> Contained in Gl 2.285 ff., and mainly addressed to the vicar of La Grande Chartreuse, Oswald of Corda.

works that Gerson's brother at Lyon, Jean the Celestine, retrieved at his death.

If this hypothesis is correct and the sermon reflects the Gerson of 1402 and not of 1422, then he was speaking to the Carthusians at about the same time as he was addressing the Cistercians. To the latter he could criticize the monasticism of his day and point to its departure from the ideals that had influenced St Bernard. To the Carthusians, however, his critical remarks concerned only the behavior of individual monks, who might forget the meaning of their vocation. To both Cistercians and Carthusians, Gerson based his sermon on the language of the Song of Songs, one of the books of the Bible which was central in his formulation of a mystical theology.

Gerson opened his sermon with his theme:

Who is it that comes, shining forth like the dawn, beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners [Song 6:9]?<sup>14</sup>

The whole of the sermon is a commentary and explication of this passage in different senses, and I do not find here the usual later medieval preaching device of a *protheme* or antetheme to complement the central theme.<sup>15</sup> Gerson did, however, follow standard late medieval sermon practice in concluding his opening statement with a prayer. In this case, it is, inevitably, the *Ave Maria*.

The relative simplicity of Gerson's opening may be the result of a desire on his part to appeal directly to his audience, without any stylistic complications. If we compare the structure of this sermon to another which Gerson made on the feast of the Birth of the Virgin, we see immediately how different Gerson's approach could be.<sup>16</sup> In preaching to the church fathers at Constance on 8 September 1416, Gerson immediately pointed out his intention to proceed "in a scholastic manner rather than with a declamatory ... sermon".<sup>17</sup> In the sermon's first consideration, Gerson dealt at length with Mary and Joseph's claims to nobility, in terms of the meaning of true nobility. This approach leads to various side

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<sup>14</sup> *Quae est ista quae progreditur quasi aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata?*

<sup>15</sup> See Brown, *Pastor and Laity*, (note 2 above) 13.

<sup>16</sup> Gl 5.344-62, with the *incipit* from Matt. 1:16: *Jacob autem genuit Joseph virum Mariae ...*

<sup>17</sup> Gl 5.344: *modo quodam scholastico plus quam declamatorio ... sermone.*

issues, even including the question of the royal succession in France.<sup>18</sup> Gerson asked how Joseph could be of royal line when he lived as a carpenter. Here and in the following passages, Gerson dealt with the family, identity, and background of Mary and Joseph. His approach can be called exegetical, political, and historical. He was dealing with an audience that would have appreciated fine points of scriptural interpretation and references to contemporary political and theological controversies. At the same time Gerson tried, as he often did in the last decades of his life, to place emphasis on the role of Joseph in the life of Christ.

Such broad themes are totally lacking in the sermon to the Carthusians. Like every good preacher, Gerson thought about the background and expectations of his audience. In Gerson's view, the Carthusians wanted and needed precise images for meditation on Mary's life. In addressing the monks, Gerson concentrated much more intensely on his biblical text and applied it to the meaning of the contemplative and monastic lives.

Having set forth his theme, Gerson spoke of four aspects of the sight (*spectaculum*) offered for admiration on that feast day: its newness, its beauty, its brightness, and its terror.<sup>19</sup> This spectacle, of course, is that of the Virgin who on that day revealed herself, and to whom we pray the "Hail Mary".

Returning to the quotation from the Song of Songs, Gerson listed the various ways it can be approached: literally, allegorically, and morally. The literal meaning can refer to the Synagogue, the people of Israel crossing the desert into the Promised Land, or it can imply Mary herself. The allegorical meaning deals with the church; the moral with any holy soul. Most of all, Gerson would seek the anagogical meaning, the hidden dimension in the text that refers to the soul that is "singularly lifted up through contemplation".<sup>20</sup>

The Synagogue is then seen in terms of this image of the dawn. Mary follows:

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<sup>18</sup> Gl 5.347: *Quae disceptatio non parvam inter duo regna christianorum clarissima, Franciae et Angliae, vel fecit vel fovit controversiam, sicut ex opusculis hinc inde confectis sciri potest; quorum sententias omittere decrevimus pro praesenti.*

<sup>19</sup> Gl 5.481: *Spectaculum hodie nobis proponitur, viri patres et fratres, spectaculum omni admiratione dignissimum quia novum, quia pulchrum, quia electum, quia terribile.*

<sup>20</sup> Gl 3.481: *Sed anagogicus de anima per contemplationem singulariter sublimata.*

beautiful as the moon in the conception of the son of God, bright as the sun in her glorification, and terrible as an army with banners in the defense of the human race.<sup>21</sup>

The same images are used to describe the work of the church and the inner workings of the holy soul. Finally there is mystical experience (*supermentales excessus*) when the soul is alone in its silence and "lifts itself beyond itself", thus becoming like the dawn.<sup>22</sup>

Gerson has here given a necessary introduction to the sermon in terms of the possible images that his quotation from the Song of Songs suggests. Setting aside any further consideration of Synagogue and church, he states his intention to speak first in the literal sense, concerning the Virgin, then morally of the soul, and finally anagogically of the soul that is elevated through contemplation.

First let us turn to his treatment of Mary in the literal sense. Solomon, whom Gerson considered to be the author of the Song of Songs, saw Mary's birth from afar and saw her qualities. Mary is the dawn because this announces the coming of the day, generates dew and puts robbers to flight. As for the first, Gerson refers to the hymn of Prudentius, *Nox atra rerum contegit*, familiar to his audience because it was used at Thursday matins.<sup>23</sup>

In this way Mary is said not to be the sun but bright as the sun because she imitates the sun by her closeness to it.<sup>24</sup>

As for the morning dew that comes with the dawn, this brings liquid to a world that otherwise would be a desert, "a place of horror and vast solitude" in a phrase from Deuteronomy 32:10 which was very popular in early Cistercian literature.<sup>25</sup> Finally, Mary puts robbers to flight. Again turning to a familiar hymn, Ambrose of Milan's *Aeterne rerum conditor* (used on Sunday at lauds) Gerson takes the verses about how the robber has to put his sword aside,

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*: ... *pulchra ut luna in conceptione Filii Dei; electa ut sol in glorificatione; et pro defensione generis humani, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.*

<sup>22</sup> Gl 5.482: *Anima postremo dum rapitur ad supermentales excessus ... levat se super se propriissime comparatur aurorae consurgenti ...*

<sup>23</sup> Text in Guido Maria Dreves and Clemens Blume, eds., *Analecta Hymnica medii aevi*, 55 vols. (Leipzig, 1886–1922) 55:29. I am grateful to Christian Troelsgaard, Institute for Greek and Latin, Copenhagen University, for this reference.

<sup>24</sup> Gl 5.482: *Hac ratione Maria dicitur non sol sed electa ut sol, quia proximiori similitudine solem imitatur.*

<sup>25</sup> See my *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Tradition* (Kalamazoo, 1991) 285–6.

and everyone living in error has to give up their harmful lives.<sup>26</sup> These are the same robbers who fell over a man on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho (cf Luke 10:30). Putting one biblical image on top of another, Gerson does not forget the person of Mary at the center of his exposition. It is she who has crushed the head of the serpent and so has become terrible as an army with banners.

In about a page of text,<sup>27</sup> Gerson has provided a compact exposition of Mary's functions in the drama of human salvation. This concentrated exposition indicates that Gerson was speaking to an audience whose members he trusted would immediately grasp his biblical allusions and liturgical references. In turning to the moral sense of his quotation from the Song of Songs, however, he spoke even more directly to the Carthusians:

Now we return to the moral sense and we can say that after the soul lay on the land in the night of sin and sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, so long as the good Virgin Mary prays for it, then the light of grace will shine forth in the dwelling place of the soul. And so the dawn begins to shine forth, once the dark clouds and shadows of vices are driven away.<sup>28</sup>

In speaking of the movement of the soul, Gerson turns to another passage in the Song 5:6: "My soul has been melted as my beloved has spoken." God protects the soul, as seen in the story of Jacob and the wrestler. After their all-night struggle, Jacob insisted on his opponent's blessing. Jacob was injured in body but obtained spiritual strength from the encounter (Gen. 32:24–29). Gerson glides from this anecdote to a line from Isaiah 40:31: "They who hope in the Lord will renew their strength." Gerson has no difficulty in placing one image on top of another, so long as they all deal with the process by which the soul emerges from darkness and receives the strength of spiritual insight.

The soul, however, is endangered by earthly affections. At this point Gerson, for the first time since the opening of the sermon, addresses his audience directly:

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<sup>26</sup> Gl 5.483: *Itaque surgente aurora: Mucro latronis conditur/Et omnis errorum chorus/ Viam nocendi deserit,/ ait Ambrosius in hymno.* See *Analecta Hymnica*, 50, 11. Note that Gerson combines lines from various parts of the hymn in order to provide his quotation. Again thanks are due to Christian Troelsgaard.

<sup>27</sup> This equals forty lines in Glorieux.

<sup>28</sup> Gl 5.483: *Nunc ad mores traducamus quae dicta sunt et dicamus quod anima postquam jacuit in terra nocte peccati seditque in tenebris et in umbra mortis, si tandem pia haec Virgo Maria faciat orationem pro ea lumen gratiae circumfulget in habitaculo animae ita ut incipiat aurora fieri pulsus nubibus et tenebris vitiorum.*



So that you will desert these attachments in your soul, fathers and brothers, the Psalmist spoke with sorrowful desire, "Who will give me wings like the dove so that I can fly forth and find rest" [Ps. 54:7]?<sup>29</sup>

This passage is a turning point in the sermon, for Gerson here included the personal experience and struggles of his audience. The rest of the Psalm passage perfectly describes for Gerson the hopes and threats of the Carthusian life, where the soul flees to a distance and remains in solitude, waiting for the one who can save the soul from weakness of spirit and the storm:

Then what follows is expressed in a pleasing manner: "Behold I have fled far away and have remained in solitude. I have awaited him who has saved me from weakness of spirit and the storm" [Ps. 54:8-9].<sup>30</sup>

In all of David's Psalms, Gerson could hardly have chosen a better place to describe the beauty and pain of eremitical life in community.

Gerson stops at this point and provides three "considerations". These deal with the situation of the soul seeking spiritual relief. The first looks at the passions the soul should control; the second the teachings it should seek; the third the soul's need for Mary. In the first place the soul should guard itself from becoming attached to worldly passions. This process would seemingly be easier in a monastery, and yet such distancing of self from worldly concerns does not always take place:

... it can sometimes happen that a religious who has rejected a great deal—or everything—in coming from the world becomes attached to little things in the monastery, or since he finds joy in minor honors, he is drawn to a kind of contempt and becomes melancholy; or he becomes concerned about a knife or a pen or some such little thing and does battle for it, as another one might for a rich kingdom.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gl 5.483-4: *Hoc affectus ut deseretis anima vestra, viri patres et fratres, dixit cum psalmista gemebundo voto: "quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbae et volabo et requiescam"* [Ps. 54.7]?

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*: *Dehinc feliciter datum est quod sequitur: "ecce elongavi fugiens et mansi in solitudine. Expectabam eum qui saluum me fecit a pusillanimitate spiritus et tempestate"* [Ps. 54:8-9].

<sup>31</sup> Gl 5.484: *Evenit nihilominus aliquando ut religiosus qui magna, immo omnia contempsit a saeculo veniens afficiatur a parvis in claustro; aut quia ad modicos honores hilaescit, ad contumeliam levem contrahitur et tristis est; de cultello vel calamo aut aliquo tali exiguo sollicitus est aut litigat, ut alius de divite regno.*

Gerson's examples indicate that he had a good knowledge of the temptations and difficulties of monastic life. Limited possibilities in terms of material acquisitions could easily mean that small objects like knives or pens became excessively important to the monks. Monastic *exemplum* literature had traditionally warned against any personal possessions.<sup>32</sup> For Gerson these things in themselves were not the problem: it was the monk's need for the enjoyment of such objects that distracted from their vocations.

Gerson warned also against suspicion among the brothers or other types of "phantasms" that could wreck the life of the community. "Opinions" and "superstitions" could also harm it, "dark clouds" that Gerson said often came from "the wind of pride".<sup>33</sup> Without going into great detail, Gerson suggested here some of the problems and pitfalls of community life when members were on the lookout for each other's faults and privileges.

A second consideration concerned the danger that the soul of the monk (here called *religiosa mens*) might abandon itself to wrongful teachings. Gerson here meant not heresy but fantasies and imaginations that he worried could lead even to insanity. The best protection from them was:

careful consideration and meditation on divine things, so that there where our hearts are set, as the Church prays, there be our true joy.<sup>34</sup>

For the third time in this sermon, Gerson referred to a passage in the liturgy that would have been familiar to his audience, in this case to the collect on the fourth Sunday after Easter.<sup>35</sup>

Gerson's desire for simplicity in the monks' way of life was combined with a fear that brothers might get obsessed in worrying about the genuineness and worth of their religious devotion. The text adds here an indication that the sermon in the form we have it is incomplete:

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<sup>32</sup> See, for example, the important Cistercian collection of moralizing stories from about 1200, the *Exordium Magnum Cisterciense*, ed. Bruno Griesser (Rome, 1961) 274–6, "*de periculo proprietatis*".

<sup>33</sup> Gl 5.484: *Quod si has nubes atque caligines quid advehat quaesieris, respondeo quod frequentius a vento superbae curiositatis insufflantur ...*

<sup>34</sup> Gl 5.484: *... sollicitae considerationis et meditationis ad divina ut ibi nostra fixa sint corda, orat Ecclesia, ubi vera sunt gaudia.*

<sup>35</sup> *... ut inter mundanas varietates, ibi nostra fixa sint corda, ubi vera sunt gaudia.* See *The Liber Usualis*, ed. by the Benedictines of Solesmes (Tournai and New York, 1959) 826.

Here a long sermon could be added against the scrupulous and fearful.<sup>36</sup>

There is no such addition, but Gerson must have intended at some point to return and revise, perhaps expanding the sermon.<sup>37</sup>

The greatest danger, he concludes in this second consideration, is pride, which does not let the soul stand but knocks it down. Gerson is more general here about the situation of the monk than he was in the last consideration, but I think he was referring to monks whose worry about not living up to high standards could turn into an obsession. He insisted that if they did not consent to their fantasies or imaginings, then they committed no sin but instead gained great merit.<sup>38</sup> Once again Gerson showed insight into the workings of the religious life and its pitfalls.

The third consideration for the person in the religious life is to flee to Mary for help and guidance:

Happy the soul to whom it will be given to go from the night of culpability to the rising dawn of grace.<sup>39</sup>

Then the soul can look upon her with admiration and say:

What is this which shines forth like the dawn?

Having thus returned to Mary and her feast day in the language of the Song of Songs, Gerson could now deal with the anagogical sense of the passage. Here the soul moves from the world and reaches the presence of God. Gerson expressed his faith in the Carthusians as especially suited for this type of experience:

And you, fathers and brothers, are called to this state among and above other religious, so that you obtain this grace, therefore a familiar solitude is your ally and is granted to you.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Gl 5.484: *Hic contra scrupulosos et timidos sermo longus posset interseri.*

<sup>37</sup> This procedure of leaving the text incomplete, and perhaps intending to do later revisions and expansions, can also be seen in Gerson's famed sermons on doing penance, from 1404. See Gl 7.2, at 918, where there is a list of nine "questions" with very brief answers that look like "notes" or "reminders" for the preacher and are certainly not full replies.

<sup>38</sup> Gl 5.484: *Si enim non consenserimus, nullum est peccatum, immo vero magnum et magnum meritum comparatur.*

<sup>39</sup> Gl 5.485: *Felix anima cui datum fuerit de nocte culpae progredi ad auroram consurgentem gratiae ...*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*: *Et quoniam vos, viri patres et fratres, in hoc vocati estis inter aut super ceteros religiosos ut gratiam hanc adipiscamini, propterea enim solitudo familiaris amica vobis est et magis indulgetur ...*

In order to describe this condition, Gerson claimed he had to turn to others who had described this movement into God. He himself could only "stammer and hesitate" about what others had experienced" (*expertaque balbutiens et garriens*). He referred to Richard of St Victor "in his *On Contemplation*".<sup>41</sup> For another writer on contemplation, Gerson also named "holy Bernard in many of his works, but by name in the one to your brothers of Mont Dieu" (thus giving us a final proof that he was speaking to a Carthusian audience).<sup>42</sup> Gerson's references to these works are not intellectual padding. Elsewhere in his writings he also made use of them, as in his *Mountain of Contemplation*, written a few years earlier for his sisters.<sup>43</sup> For the chancellor it was important that such teachings on the contemplative life be made available both to lay persons, to scholars, and to monks.

The teaching that Gerson here derived from the mystical tradition was quite brief, as if he were confident that his audience already knew its main points. Our soul has two faces, for we are attached to two different worlds, that of the senses, and that of the spirit. Most people are content with the first world, while a deeper form of cognition brings forth "a certain spiritual and immaterial day".<sup>44</sup> By comparison the former material day seems like darkness. We can reach a type of spiritual knowledge that approaches the complete illumination we expect in the total noonday of heaven. Solomon saw this enlightened soul and was thus inspired to celebrate it in the passage from the Song of Songs about how the dawn shines forth.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Gerson probably meant Richard's *De gratia contemplationis*, also known as *Benjamin Major* or *The Mystical Ark*, found in PL 196 and translated by Grover A. Zinn, in *Richard of St. Victor*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York, 1979).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*: ... et beatus Bernardus in multis opusculis, tum nominatim ad vestros fratres De Monte Dei ... The work is contained in PL 184, 307–64, where it is attributed to Guigo, the fifth prior of La Grande Chartreuse. For a history of the text and attribution of authorship to William of St Thierry, see J.-M. Déchanet's introduction to the translation by Theodore Berkeley, *The Golden Epistle. A Letter to the Brethren at Mont Dieu* (Kalamazoo, 1976) especially ix–xviii.

<sup>43</sup> See Gl 7.1, p. 40, par. 32: *Memoire du livre maistre Richart qu'il fist de contemplation, tres excellentement.*

<sup>44</sup> Gl 5.486: *Et haec cognitio dum radiat in spiritu nostro causat diem quemdam spiritualem et immaterialem ...*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*: *Salomon igitur videns animam in contemplatione suspensam et progredientem et illuminatam, admiratur et quaerit: quae est ista quae progreditur quasi aurora consurgens* [Song 6:9]?

Gerson then asks how we can reach this state. His reply is anchored in the Christian mystical tradition going back to the text of the Bible itself:

I answer that neither human learning nor effort are enough to teach us. It is only anointing which teaches us, even though both teaching and our efforts provide some progress.<sup>46</sup>

Gerson was referring to 1 John 2:27:

It is not necessary that anyone teach you, since his anointing will teach you all things.

Bernard of Clairvaux had similarly used the passage in his *Sermon on Conversion*, as Gerson himself probably noticed and indicated in his own sermon on Bernard.<sup>47</sup> It is interesting that Gerson did not here completely reject the usefulness of our own learning and efforts: they can get us a certain distance, even though it is the anointing freely provided by God that is our main teacher. In the late medieval debate on free will and God's intervention, Gerson regularly insisted on the value of doing the best one could.<sup>48</sup>

Gerson did not allow himself, however, to develop this theme. Instead he provided his listeners with a brief list of writings on the mystical life: Bonaventure's *The Soul's Journey into God*,<sup>49</sup> another work called *Seven Paths of Eternity*<sup>50</sup>; *The Roads of Sion Weep*,<sup>51</sup> and

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*: ... respondeo quod nec doctrina humana nec industria docere sufficiunt. Sola est unctio quae hoc perdoceat quamquam nonnihil proficiunt tam doctrina quam industria.

<sup>47</sup> Gl 5.336: *Accipite, sicut olim respondi, quod sola hoc docet experientia non doctrina, unctio non lectio.* See Bernard's *Sermo ad clericos. De conversione*, 13.25, in *SBO* 4:99–100: *Non illud eruditio sed unctio docet, nec scientia sed conscientia comprehendit.* Marie-Bernard Saïd, trans., *Sermons on Conversion* (Kalamazoo, 1981) 61.

<sup>48</sup> For Gerson's teaching on individual effort in terms of the sacrament of penance, see Thomas Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977) 280.

<sup>49</sup> Available in *Opera theologica selecta*, vol. 5 (Quaracchi, 1966) 179–214. There are many translations to English, such as that of Ewert Cousins in *The Classics of Western Spirituality* series (New York, 1978).

<sup>50</sup> This work, *De septem itineribus aeternitatis*, was attributed to Bonaventure but was actually written by Ralph of Biberach. It is contained in A.C. Peltier's edition of Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia* 8 (Paris, 1866) 393–482. I am grateful to Stephen A. Allen of the Medieval Institute, Notre Dame University, for this reference.

<sup>51</sup> Also attributed to Bonaventure and entitled "Mystica Theologia," the *Viae Sion lugent* was similarly published by A.C. Peltier in vol. 8, 1–53. The work is now ascribed to the fourteenth-century Franciscan Hugh of Balma and is available in a new translation by Dennis Martin of Loyola University, in the *Classics of Western Spirituality* series: *Carthusian Spirituality: The*

Gilbert of Hoyland in one of his homilies on the Song of Songs.<sup>52</sup> It is interesting that Gerson here pointed to relatively recent works on the mystical life and not to classical treatises, such as the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius. Gerson probably did so in order to provide useful material for an audience that would have been interested not in theoretical treatises but in more immediate descriptions of human experience on the basis of biblical exegesis.

At this point, the end of the sermon as we have it, Gerson made a modest attempt to describe what happens to the soul that reaches mystical contemplation. The soul can be lifted up through the greatness of its devotion, through the power of its cognition or because of the magnitude of its self-abasement and fear. There are various paths, and these are described in terms of a "consurrection", by which the soul raises itself out of itself. The process is compared to what happens when the moon pulls on the sea and elevates it:

... not differently the soul when it is affected by the infusion of divine clemency and mercy, in a certain way it grows warm in devotion and boils over so that it lifts itself above itself.<sup>53</sup>

Gerson has reached a level of mystical contemplation where language is inadequate. This may explain why the sermon stops here. But the reason may be more banal, that the busy Parisian chancellor never had an opportunity to write the sermon out more fully. We can assume that the text we have is not necessarily the one delivered to the Carthusians, nor do we even have proof that Gerson ever actually preached to these monks. We can only say that Gerson intended to preach to them about the workings of the mystical life in terms of the Birth of the Virgin and her role in human salvation. The shining dawn could be Mary or it could be the soul that one of the persons of the Trinity had taken into its care.

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*Writings of Hugh of Balma and Guigo de Ponte.*

<sup>52</sup> Gerson referred to the Cistercian Gilbert of Hoyland's continuation of Bernard's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, contained in PL 184. But these only go up to the fifth chapter of the Song, and so Gerson was actually pointing to one of the sermons on the last part of the Song, made by John of Ford. See *Iohannes de Forda, Super extremam partem Cantici canticorum sermones* CXX.I. Sermones 1–LXIX, eds. Edmund Mikkers and Hilary Costello, in the series CCCM 17 (Turnhout, 1970).

<sup>53</sup> Gl 5.486: ... *non aliter anima ex influxu divinae clementiae et misericordiae affecta quodam modo in devotione fervesceat et ebulliens levat se supra se.*

Gerson clearly intended to convey this message to the Carthusians. He felt that they would understand his meaning and be grateful for the opportunity to relate a beautiful passage from the Song of Songs to the liturgy for Mary's feast day and their own meditation on the content of a solitary and mystical life.

*Conclusion: Gerson and Bernard*

After this brief exposition of the content of Gerson's sermon, it might be worthwhile to relate his technique to that of Bernard of Clairvaux. The great Cistercian would have been known to Gerson as a preacher who made use of the Song of Songs and who also had addressed a monastic audience. What strikes one immediately is the way Gerson, unlike Bernard, remained rigorously close to his original text, first explaining how it could be understood in terms of various meanings, and then concentrating on its literal sense in terms of Mary, a moral sense in terms of monastic life, and an analogical sense in the soul's possibility to reach contemplation.

This pure, simple structure is not apparent in several of Bernard's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, where the abbot of Clairvaux used a much freer technique, based on verbal associations.<sup>54</sup> Certainly there is structure in what Bernard said and wrote, and one would be misrepresenting his art if one imagined that his technique allowed stream of consciousness-type association. But the reader or listener never knows at the opening of a sermon where Bernard will end or what themes he will take up. He might concentrate on the biblical text in terms of its meanings, but he also might take off on a single word and dwell at length on its meanings.

For Bernard, the text of the Song was primarily an opening point for introducing various subjects about the monastic life. In the old process of *lectio et meditatio* so familiar in the cloister and so well described by Jean Leclercq,<sup>55</sup> Bernard could go almost anywhere the spirit led him. Gerson, with his scholastic training, was more

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<sup>54</sup> I refer, of course, to some of the studies of Jean Leclercq, most easily available in his *Recueil d'études sur Saint Bernard et ses écrits*, especially vol. 3 (Rome, 1969), with a wonderful comparison between Bernard and Mozart (p. 209).

<sup>55</sup> *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu* (Paris, 1957), especially 19–23.

disciplined in his approach and felt obliged to tell his listeners (or readers) what he was going to do with them.

Gerson's greater emphasis on making structure visible and following an outline does not mean, however, that he left behind the traditional monastic concern for meditating on texts and drawing out their spiritual meaning. Time and again in this sermon, Gerson returned to his text and asked what the dawn could mean, how the moon could be fair, the sun bright, and an army terrible with banners. The images can apply to the Synagogue, the church, Mary, or the soul. Gerson spent the greater part of his sermon in relating Mary and the contemplative soul to biblical and liturgical language and images. As one reads carefully through the sermon, there is one linguistic layer after another, just as in Bernard's sermons, but the logic and development are far easier to follow than in Bernard.

Gerson could play the dry scholastic, using sermons to impress colleagues with his knowledge and solving various theoretical questions, as he did at the Council of Constance in his other sermon on the Nativity of the Virgin. But in this earlier sermon, he was talking to fathers and brothers of the Carthusian order, with whom he wanted to share a fascination with the content and meaning of the mystical life. In this case it was not important to solve theological questions but to find ways to open the spirit to the persons of the Trinity.

During these years shortly after 1400 Gerson was reshaping his life at the university of Paris and insisting that the teacher and preacher of theology must move as well as inform his audience. If our chronology is correct and the sermon was given in 1402, then Gerson was lecturing on scholastic terms about mystical theology for his students at almost the same time as he preached to monks on entrance into the mystical life. He found no conflict between the university's academic agenda and his own devotion to men of solitude and religion who had dedicated themselves to a life of prayer and meditation. Instead of idealizing such monks, Gerson showed an awareness of their lives in terms of petty concerns and distractions. In these same lives, however, Gerson saw an opening to God's special anointing, in experiencing a light that shines forth like the dawn. This light Gerson found in Mary's arrival in the world and in the soul that seeks greater awareness of God's presence. Gerson's sermon to the Carthusians is a celebration of a



meeting between the human and the divine, in a light that heralds the beginning of the act of Redemption.

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## EARLY FIFTEENTH-CENTURY CHAPTERHOUSE SERMONS AT THE CHARTERHOUSE OF MAINZ

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From the earliest Carthusian legislation, the *Consuetudines Cartusiae*,<sup>1</sup> compiled around 1127 by Guigo, fifth prior of the Grande Chartreuse, presumably purveying the thoughts of Bruno of Cologne, the founder of the Grande Chartreuse in 1084, it is clear that preaching was not considered part of the Carthusian vocation. In Chapter 28, *De utensilibus cellae*, paragraph 3, it is stipulated:

We wish books to be compiled and kept with the greatest care as eternal nourishment for our souls, so that we may preach the word of God with our hands, since we may not do so with our mouths.<sup>2</sup>

The modest written apostolate envisaged was, however, decisively limited both by the isolation of the early charterhouses, mostly situated in remote alpine valleys, and the highly restrictive policy regarding visitors and guests. Two chapters of the *Consuetudines Cartusiae* deal with the topic. Chapter 20, referring to the poor, *De pauperibus et elemosinis*,<sup>3</sup> states bluntly that the Carthusians have withdrawn to inaccessible places for the good of their souls and that such alms as they can give will be distributed in populated areas. For this reason they seldom accommodate guests. Chapter 36, *De hospitibus suscipiendis*, specifies:

In the upper house only clerics may pass the night.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Guigo I, prior of the Grande Chartreuse, *Coutumes de Chartreuse*, Sources chrétiennes 313, ed. and trans., a Carthusian [M. Laporte] (Paris, 1984) [hereafter cited as *Coutumes*]. All English translations are by the author of the present paper.

<sup>2</sup> *Coutumes*, par. 3, 224: *Libros quippe tanquam sempiternum animarum nostrarum cibum cautissime custodiri et studiosissime volumus fieri, ut quia ore non possumus, dei verbum manibus predicemus.*

<sup>3</sup> *Coutumes*, par. 1, 206.

<sup>4</sup> *Coutumes*, par. 4, 238: *In superiori autem domo, non nisi religiosi hospites iacere consuerunt.*

The word “*sermo*” does, indeed, appear in the *Consuetudines Cartusiae*, but in Chapter 10, *Quales hospites introducantur in chorum*, it refers merely to a pious conversation with clerics in the cloister:

We allow clerical guests to enter our choir, and also to participate in a conversation (*sermonem*) in the cloister.<sup>5</sup>

Such a conversation did, however, on one noted occasion lead to a sermon proper. When Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, visited the newly-founded charterhouse of Witham at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Witham Chronicle records how Adam the Carthusian, former Praemonstratensian abbot of Dryburgh, was called upon to preach to the archbishop in the cloister, which he did with such eloquence that the archbishop accompanied him to his cell afterwards, confessed his sins, laid off his garments, and received the discipline of rods at Adam’s hands, though one may assume that the Carthusian did not strike His Grace too hard.<sup>6</sup>

In Chapter 16 of the *Consuetudines Cartusiae*, *De procuratore domus inferioris*, there is a more specific mention of preaching regarding the procurator, who in the early centuries of the order resided at the corrie or lower house, with the *conversi* or lay brothers, charged with the administration of the estates, at some distance below the charterhouse proper:

The lay brethren need more frequent instruction, as they have not studied.<sup>7</sup>

Little textual evidence of such exhortations for the lay brethren has survived for the medieval period. However, Wolfram D. Sexauer’s<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Coutumes*, par. 1, 184: *In chorum nostrum, hospites tantum religiosos introducimus, cum quibus, in clauastro communem licet habere sermonem.*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. Wilmart, “Maître Adam ... devenu chartreux à Witham,” *Analecta Praemonstratensia* 9 (1933) 207–32; Adam of Eynsham, *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, eds. Decima L. Douie and D. Hugh Farmer, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1961) 1:xxvi–xxvii, 2:52–4; and E. Margaret Thompson, *The Carthusian Order in England* (London, 1930) 75–6. Various scholars have claimed that sermons from Adam’s Carthusian period are extant, but M.J. Hamilton is skeptical. See M.J. Hamilton, *Adam of Dryburgh: Six Christmas Sermons: Introduction and Translation*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 16 (Salzburg, 1974) 57–8.

<sup>7</sup> *Coutumes*, par. 2, 200: *Tanto enim frequentioribus predicationibus indigent, quanto minus litteras norunt.* A further use of “*sermo*” in Chapter 36, par. 4 does not refer to preaching: *Et quoniam de priore sermo se intulit, addendum est, qualem se in susceptae domus negociis soleat exhibere.*

<sup>8</sup> Wolfram D. Sexauer, *Frühneuhochdeutsche Schriften in Kartäuserbibliotheken: Untersuchungen zur Pflege der volkssprachlichen Literatur in Kartäuserklöstern des*

investigations of library catalogues and manuscript collections did reveal a certain amount of literature in the vernacular in the southern charterhouses of the Holy Roman Empire; but only a manuscript from the charterhouse of Güterstein, *Modus procedendi in sermones*,<sup>9</sup> is really relevant to our survey. My own researches concerning Middle English Carthusian manuscripts produced no evidence of Carthusian sermons in the vernacular.<sup>10</sup>

If there is no reference to sermons in the monks' chapterhouse in the initial Carthusian legislative collection, this does not necessarily mean that none were delivered. In fact, the *Statuta Antiqua* (1259–71) accept such sermons as part of the established observance in Part I, Chapter 32, *De Solemnitatibus Candelarum*,<sup>11</sup> where the solemnities are recorded in paragraph 1 as: Christmas Day, the Feasts of Stephen, John, the Holy Innocents, Circumcision, Epiphany, the Purification, the Annunciation, Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, Mary Magdalene, the Assumption, the Birth of Our Lady, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Archangel Michael, All Saints', the Feast of Relics, and the Dedication of the church of the upper house. Paragraph 6 indicates:

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*oberdeutschen Raums bis zum Einsetzen der Reformation*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 1. Deutsche Literatur und Germanistik 247 (Frankfurt am Main, 1978).

<sup>9</sup> Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, 4°78, fols. 131r–51r. Edition in Paul Lehmann, ed., *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz*, Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge 1 (Munich, 1918) 154–75. Cf. Sexauer, *Frühneuhochdeutsche Schriften* 103. A further reference, Sexauer, *Frühneuhochdeutsche Schriften* 151, to the fourteenth-century manuscript Basel, Oeffentliche Bibliothek der Universität, B.x1.10 from the charterhouse of Basel, containing among other items mystical sermons, is not relevant in our context, as it consists mainly of sermons by the Dominican Eckhart. It is described in great detail by G. Meyer and M. Burckhardt, *Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Abteilung B: Theologische Pergamenthandschriften*, Vol. 2: *Signaturen B VIII 11—B XI 26* (Basel, 1966) 934–58.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. James Hogg, "Carthusian Liturgical Documents from the MS. British Museum Nero A.iii," *Analecta Cartusiana* 31 (1977) 120–5; and James Hogg, "Further Liturgical Documents from the MS. British Museum Nero A.iii," *Miscellanea Cartusiensia*, vol. 3, *Analecta Cartusiana* 42 (1978) 70–101. Somewhat surprisingly, the Middle English texts are for the choir monks rather than the lay brethren, which would seem to suggest that the standard of Latinity in the English charterhouses left something to be desired.

<sup>11</sup> James Hogg, ed., *The Evolution of the Carthusian Statutes from the Consuetudines Guigonis to the Tertia Compilatio*, Documents: vol. 1: *Consuetudines Guigonis; Prima Pars Statutorum Antiquorum*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 99 (Salzburg, 1989) 116.

The sermon may be delivered in Latin, the vernacular, or a mixture of both.<sup>12</sup>

The text might seem to imply that there was a sermon on all these days, but in fact there was none for Stephen, John the Evangelist, the Holy Innocents, the Circumcision, Peter and Paul, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Feast of Relics, or the Dedication; and the language most frequently utilized, until recent years, was Latin in the monks' chapterhouse, though obviously the procurator or his substitute spoke to the lay brethren in their chapter in the vernacular. Sermons were not held in Carthusian churches, which were therefore not provided with a pulpit.<sup>13</sup>

Normally the prior preached the sermon. However, the *Statuta Antiqua*, Part II, Chapter 6,<sup>14</sup> already envisaged the possibility of his nominating a deputy, which was probably frequently necessary if the prior was provincial visitor or away attending the annual general chapter at the Grande Chartreuse, a journey that took several weeks from distant charterhouses.

In 1335 the Carthusian general chapter forbade all preaching outside the cloister, or the chapterhouses of the monks and lay brethren, virtually excluding any secular presence, as the monk's duty was to "lament and not to teach".<sup>15</sup> This prohibition was reinforced by the refusal to allow Carthusians to preach in the parish church adjacent to the charterhouse of Lubeck in 1473.<sup>16</sup> In 1571 preaching outside the charterhouse was again forbidden, as was the hearing of confessions of female penitents.<sup>17</sup>

Only in the *Statuta Nova* of 1368 do we find the solemnities with chapter sermon clearly indicated—Christmas, the Epiphany, the Purification, the Annunciation, Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost,

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* In *dispositione facientis Sermonem sit loqui latine, vel vulgariter, vel mixtim.*

<sup>13</sup> The pulpits which can be seen in some Carthusian churches, e.g. Aggsbach on the Danube, date from the period after the suppression in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when they were adapted as parish churches.

<sup>14</sup> James Hogg, ed., *The Evolution of the Carthusian Statutes from the Consuetudines Guigonis to the Tertia Compilatio, Documents: Vol. 2: Secunda Pars Statutorum Antiquorum; Tertia Pars Statutorum Antiquorum; Statuta Nova*, Analecta Cartusiana 99 (Salzburg, 1989) 173.

<sup>15</sup> [M. Laporte], *Ex Chartis Capitulorum Generalium: Ab initio usque ad annum 1951* (In Domo Cartusiae, 1953) Admonition 434 [hereafter cited as *Ex Chartis*].

<sup>16</sup> *Ex Chartis*, Admonition 1180.

<sup>17</sup> *Ex Chartis*, Admonition 1616.

the Birth of John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, the Assumption, Nativity of Our Lady, Archangel Michael, All Saints', and Hugh of Lincoln—and even this text allows a certain liberty for local custom.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of the medieval period the *Tertia Compilatio Statutorum Ordinis Cartusiensis* of 1509 regulates the nomination of the prior charged with delivering the sermon and collation for the general chapter at the Grande Chartreuse. It stipulates that if they should be prevented from making the journey, they should notify the prior of the Grande Chartreuse or the provincial visitor in good time, so that a substitute might be arranged—otherwise they would be deprived of their stall in the choir for two months in addition to such further severe punishment as their contempt or negligence might merit. It was also stated that the sermons might be read from a written text—a precedent that might be applied to all similar occasions.<sup>19</sup> Although perhaps not a reflection on their quality, it is interesting to note that when a prior delivered the sermon the auditors received a hundred days indulgence, but, on the probably rare occasions when a monk who was not a prior was called upon, they received only fifty days indulgence. One sermon about St Bruno was promptly printed, almost certainly at Cologne, in 1516. This *Sermo de sancto Brunone* was preached by Petrus Blomevenna on the text, *Similabo eum viro sapienti qui edificavit domum suam super petram* (Matt. 7:24); for didactic purposes Petrus, while preaching, displayed a painting of the city of Cologne, at the general chapter of 1516, following the canonization of St Bruno by Pope Leo x on 19 July 1514. Though eloquent and clearly the work of a man of deep spirituality, it probably arouses little enthusiasm in the modern reader.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Statuta Nova*, 279 (see note 14).

<sup>19</sup> James Hogg ed., *The Evolution of the Carthusian Statutes from the "Consuetudines Guigonis" to the "Tertia Compilatio"*, *Documents*, Vol. 3: *Tertia Compilatio Statutorum Ordinis Cartusiensis; Repertorium Statutorum Ordinis Cartusiensis per Ordinem Alphabeti*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 99 (Salzburg, 1989) par. 11–12, 361: *Quibus iniunctus est sermo vel collatio in capitulo generali possunt si volunt illum et illam in scriptis recitare.*

<sup>20</sup> The text has been edited by James Hogg, "Petrus Blomevenna: *Vita Sancti Brunonis* and *Sermo de Sancto Brunone*," in *The Mystical Tradition and the Carthusians*, vol. 2, *Analecta Cartusiana* 130 (Salzburg, 1995) 30–143. For further information on Blomevenna see James Hogg ed., *Petrus Blomevenna und sein Traktat De Bonitate Divina*, in *The Mystical Tradition and the Carthusians*, vol. 6, *Analecta Cartusiana* 130 (Salzburg, 1995) 3–13.

The proposition that sermons might be presented in writing fell, however, on receptive ears. A substantial collection of the sermons of William Bibauce, prior of the Grande Chartreuse 1521-35, were printed at Antwerp in 1539 under the title *Reverendi Patris Guilielmi Bibauci Viri in sacris literis disertissimi ad fratres Carthusiae: sacrae conciones*.<sup>21</sup> Although not published, the recent prior of the Grande Chartreuse (1967-97), André Poisson, has circulated a series of spiritual collations to the other houses of the order, which have been translated into the various vernacular languages, while Carthusian nuns have compiled indices listing the contents of these sermons. A former novice-master of the Grande Chartreuse, Cyril, the present prior of Parkminster, has even published the conferences he gave to his novices over the years,<sup>22</sup> while the chapter sermons of Ange Helly, former prior of Montrieux and founder of the Hermits of St Bruno at Parisot in southern France, were recently printed in a pirated edition.<sup>23</sup> Other collections, dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been preserved,<sup>24</sup> while a substantial number of medieval manuscripts conserved in public depositories contain sermons by Carthusians which are listed in APPENDIX III. A few more are located in the archives of the Grande Chartreuse. These are listed in APPENDIX IV.

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<sup>21</sup> They were reprinted several times: cf. Albert Gruys, *Cartusiana: un instrument heuristique, a heuristic instrument, ein heuristischer Apparat*, Bibliographies, colloques, travaux préparatoires, vol. 1 (Paris, 1976) 49. A. Devaux, *La Poésie latine chez les Chartreux; Une Anthologie avec traduction française*, Analecta Cartusiana 131 (1997) 218-21, speaks with considerable respect of his polished Latinity.

<sup>22</sup> A Carthusian, *The Way of Silent Love: Carthusian Novice Conferences, the beatitudes*, Cistercian Studies Series 149 (Kalamazoo, 1993); A Carthusian, *The Call of Silent Love: Carthusian Novice Conferences: Vocation and Discernment*, Cistercian Studies Series 163 (Kalamazoo, 1995); and *Interior Prayer: Carthusian Novice Conferences*, Cistercian Studies Series 164 (Kalamazoo, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> A Carthusian, *Sermons Capitulaires* (Éditions Sainte Madeleine, 1988).

<sup>24</sup> The Carthusian Guigues Plez, professed of the Valsainte, possessed a collection of several hundred sermons, including a considerable number by priors of the Grande Chartreuse in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He asked that all his papers should be destroyed after his death, but I have been unable to ascertain whether his wishes were fulfilled on his death at the Valsainte recently. The early sermons of Ferdinand Vidal, prior of the Grande Chartreuse 1938-67, are preserved at the charterhouse of Farneta, where they were utilized by Anselm Gontier in preparing his own sermons! Various other recent collections, such of those of the procurator general, John Baptist Porion, and of Ducamin, prior of Ségnac, and those of the present prior of Ségnac, are also extant. An envelope in the archives of Ségnac contains the sermons of Gerard Hulsbosch, who deputized for his prior on various occasions.

The fourteen chapter sermons of the charterhouse of Mainz are extant in the manuscript Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, I.193, which bears the title on fol. 1r: *Sermones Capitulares totius anni pro usu fratrum Carthusianorum*.<sup>25</sup> The manuscript is clearly written in a cursive hand, with a Gothic initial for each sermon. Division marks between phrases in the text suggest that it was used for public reading, but a correction on fol. 27r demonstrates that it is not the author's autograph copy, though most of the adjustments are in the scribe's hand. A table of contents on fol. 2r facilitates consultation:<sup>26</sup>

Book of the Carthusians near Mainz, containing chapter sermons for the whole year ... Christmas / Epiphany / Purification / Annunciation / Easter / Ascension / Pentecost / John the Baptist / Mary Magdalene<sup>27</sup> / Assumption / Nativity of Our Lady / St Michael / All Saints' / Saint Hugh<sup>28</sup>

The manuscript can be dated fairly precisely by the colophon on fol. 47v:<sup>29</sup>

The conferences of the Fathers for the major feast days, transcribed by John of Seligenstadt, terminate here, 1418, at the epoch of the Council of Constance.

"*Per manus*" presumably indicates that John of Seligenstadt<sup>30</sup> was the scribe rather than the author of the sermons. Unfortunately he cannot be identified among the professed monks of the charter-

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<sup>25</sup> The manuscript is described in detail by Philippe Dupont, ed., *Sermones capitulares de la Chartreuse de Mayence du début du xv<sup>e</sup> siècle. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, Analecta Cartusiana 46 (Salzburg, 1978) 1, who has provided a critical text with an informative introduction (1–22). The paper manuscript consists of 48 folios measuring 21 x 14,5 cms. with 22 lines to the page, and is bound in skin over boards. The spine, which bears the mark of the charterhouse, is damaged.

<sup>26</sup> *Liber Carthusiensis prope Moguntiam / continens sermones capitulares pro totius anni circulum. / ... De Nativitate Domini / De Epiphania Domini / De Purificatione / De Annuntiatione Dominica / De Resurrectione Domini / De Ascensione / De Penthecoste / De festo Iohannes Baptistae / De beata Maria Magdalena / De Assumptione virginis / In Nativitate virginis gloriosae / In die sancto Michaelis / De Omnibus Sanctis / De Sancto Hugone.*

<sup>27</sup> The Feast of St Mary Magdalene was raised to the rank of a solemnity with sermon in 1283.

<sup>28</sup> The solemnity of the Carthusian St Hugh of Lincoln was inserted into the Carthusian calendar in 1359.

<sup>29</sup> *Expliciunt collationes patrum in summis festivitatis per manus Iohannis de Seligenstadt. Anno milleno centum quatuor decimo octavo, tempore concilii civitatis constanciensis.*

<sup>30</sup> Seligenstadt is 50 kilometers east of Mainz.



house of Mainz.<sup>31</sup> Assuming that the author of the sermons was the prior, a candidate can be presented—Johannes VIII Kessler<sup>32</sup> from Frankfurt am Main, professed of the charterhouse of Mainz, and prior there 1394–96, from whence he was called to the priorate of the charterhouse Horti Christi near Nördlingen in 1396. He seems to have remained there until 1402, when he was again elected prior of Mainz by the community, but was sent back as prior to Nördlingen in 1403, where a difficult situation had arisen. He was once more prior in Mainz around 1409, and was *diffinitor*, that is a member of the inner legislative group, at the Carthusian general chapter which terminated the schism in the order in 1410, when he was promoted from co-visitor, an office he had held since 1406, to provincial visitor. He remained prior until 1418, dying on 17 May 1425.

It may not be without significance that John of Seligenstadt in his colophon refers to *collationes patrum*, for Rabanus Maurus, archbishop of Mainz, had compiled a lectionary *per totum circulum anni* taken *de diversorum patrum opusculis*.<sup>33</sup> The Mainz chapterhouse sermons prove to be an elaborate compilation of direct and indirect quotations from the Fathers of the church, probably largely based on *florilegia*, backed up by an enviable knowledge of the Scriptures and some acquaintance, not only of the scholastics, but also of medieval spiritual and mystical writers.

Philippe Dupont,<sup>34</sup> in the best Benedictine tradition, identified references in the Mainz chapterhouse sermons to 62 non-biblical authorities, 278 citations in all [see APPENDIX I<sup>35</sup>], and 333 biblical citations [see APPENDIX II<sup>36</sup>]. Surprisingly, as indicated in APPENDIX I, there is only one reference to the *Vitae patrum* and no references to Cassian at all. Benedict is referred to only once, but

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<sup>31</sup> He cannot be identified in the list of professed monks of the charterhouse of Mainz furnished by J. Simmert, *Die Geschichte der Kartause zu Mainz*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Mainz 16 (Mainz 1958) 37–9, though several monks with the name Johannes appear in the first half of the fifteenth century.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J. Simmert, *Die Geschichte der Kartause zu Mainz* 31–2.

<sup>33</sup> *Hrabani (Mauri) Epistolae*, "Epistola 50 ad Lotharium imperatorem": cf. E. Dümmler, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1899) 504.

<sup>34</sup> At the time of his researches Dupont was chauffeur and secretary to the abbot of Solesmes. As abbot himself, administrative work for his community has unfortunately limited the time available for further works of scholarship.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. for the references in detail, P. Dupont, *Sermons capitulaires*, 187–93.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. for the specific references: *ibid.* 182–6.

this should not be as surprising since the Carthusians did not, of course, follow the Rule of Benedict.<sup>37</sup>

Certainly the author of these sermons cannot be compared to the early Cistercians. There is no lyrical élan, but merely a clear aim at edification. The personality of the preacher is largely hidden behind his authorities and his theology is markedly traditional, although he has virtually nothing to say on the church as the Mystical Body of Christ—a silence perhaps influenced by the events of the Great Schism. It seems probable that his technique is derived from the Carthusian Henry of Calcar's *Articula pro collatione facienda*, a short practical treatise, of which two of the three surviving copies came from the charterhouse of Mainz.<sup>38</sup> Heinrich Rüthing asserts:

The articles are marked by their brevity, clarity and simplicity. A specifically Carthusian method of preaching cannot be identified in them.<sup>39</sup>

In any event, the sermons follow the rhetorical principles presented in Charland's *Artes praedicandi*,<sup>40</sup> whereby the theme was first announced, followed by a prayer for enlightenment both for the preacher and his audience, invoking the aid of Our Lady in the process, before repeating the theme a second time, which was then developed in various subdivisions with a wealth of scriptural quotations, backed up by patristic references, and drawing on the scholastics, particularly Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, for greater lucidity and clarity in the argumentation. Although the

<sup>37</sup> Cf. James Hogg, "The Carthusians and the 'Rule of St. Benedict,'" in *Itinera Domini: Gesammelte Aufsätze aus Liturgie und Mönchtum: Emmanuel v. Severus OSB zur Vollendung des 80. Lebensjahres am 24. August 1988 dargeboten, Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinertums*, ed. A. Rosenthal, Supplementband 5 (Münster 1988) 281–318.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Heinrich Rüthing, *Der Kartäuser Heinrich Egger von Kalkar 1328–1408*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 18, Studien zur Germania Sacra 8 (Göttingen 1967) 104–7. The surviving manuscripts are Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, 819, fols. 145v–146v from the charterhouse of Cologne, Mainz, Stadtbibliothek, I.325, fols. 84v–85v and I 326, fols. 231r–232r, from the charterhouse of Mainz. The Darmstadt ms. refers to a manuscript from the charterhouse of Coblenz that does not appear to be extant. In Mainz, Stadtbibliothek I.325, a brief *Modus faciendi sermones ad fratres conversos* follows on fol. 86v.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 106: *Die Articula fallen durch Kürze, Klarheit und Einfachheit auf. Eine für die Kartäuser spezifische Predigtweise läßt sich in ihnen nicht erkennen.*

<sup>40</sup> Thomas M. Charland, *Artes praedicandi: Contribution à l'histoire de la rhétorique au moyen âge*, Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales d'Ottawa 7 (Paris/Ottawa, 1936) 109–230.

rhetorical requirements of the age imposed their framework on the sermons, there are digressions. Neither the Christmas sermon nor that for Hugh of Lincoln handle all the points announced at the beginning. The preacher on a number of occasions effectively employs homely images, but some of his exhortations seem slightly misplaced considering his audience:

Give alms and then indeed everything will be clean for you.<sup>41</sup>

This does not seem particularly applicable to the group of Carthusian monks living in seclusion at Mainz, even if the monastery collectively certainly did not ignore its obligations to charity, whilst the admonition "*simus ... in voluptatibus continentes*"<sup>42</sup> [let us be ... temperate in pleasures] was hopefully superfluous in view of the austere lives they led.

As the order always displayed a special devotion to Our Lady,<sup>43</sup> it is not surprising that she figures very prominently in this collection, which devotes four sermons specifically to her. In the sermon for her Nativity she is touchingly described as the dawn of grace for mankind.<sup>44</sup> Particularly her charity, humility, and obedience are praised:<sup>45</sup>

She is exalted especially because of her great humility and thus the words of the gospel are verified: "Who humbles himself, will be exalted." Therefore let us be humble, my fathers ...<sup>46</sup>

Though he frequently discourses on contrition, confession, and satisfaction as regards one's sins, he shows admirable equilibrium, being in no way obsessed by the omnipresence of evil and the flames of hell.<sup>47</sup> Only the sermons for the feasts of John the Baptist, for whom the Carthusians have always had a special devotion,

<sup>41</sup> *Date elemosinam ecce omnia munda sunt vobis* [Luke 11:41]. "Sermo in purificatione Mariae," l.51, 58 (all sermon references are to Dupont's edition, see note 25).

<sup>42</sup> "*Sermo in Epiphania Domini*," ll.100–104, 52.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Yves Gourdel, "Le culte de la très Sainte Vierge dans l'Ordre des Chartreux," in *Maria: Études sur la Sainte Vierge*, ed. H. du Manoir, vol. 2 (Paris, 1952) 625–78.

<sup>44</sup> "*Sermo in nativitate b. Mariae virginis*," ll.58–62, 148.

<sup>45</sup> "*Sermo in annuntiatione Dominica*," ll.57–62, 66.

<sup>46</sup> "*Sermo in assumptione b. Mariae virginis*," ll.39–42, 134: *Exaltata est enim specialiter propter sui magnam humilitatem et sic verificatum est in ea quod in evangelio legitur: Qui se humiliat exaltabitur. Simus ergo humiles, patres mei ...* Cf. also ll.61–6, 136.

<sup>47</sup> Cf., for example, "*Sermo in festivitate Mariae Magdalenae*," ll.34–41, 124.

even mentioning him in their vow of profession,<sup>48</sup> and Hugh of Lincoln have anything specifically Carthusian about them; and, even here, only generalities suited to any community seeking to progress in the spiritual life, stressing mortification, manual work, abstinence, and poverty prevail. Twice in the sermon for John the Baptist he does invoke the Carthusian observance:

O good and faithful monks, such should be the desert that we have come to inhabit after quitting the vanity of the world.<sup>49</sup>

And again urging that they might, through Christ's grace, live purely, chastely, and obediently in the desert.<sup>50</sup>

Those seeking a synthesis of Carthusian spirituality, or even insight into Carthusian life in the early fifteenth century, in the Mainz chapterhouse sermons will be, unfortunately, doomed to disappointment. Though solid in doctrine and at times eloquent, they are typical products of their period, displaying little that is specifically monastic in outlook and still less that bears the hall-mark of the Carthusians.

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Coutumes*, Chapter 23, 214: "*Professio novicii*."

<sup>49</sup> "*Sermo in nativitate sancti Iohannis Baptistae*," ll.112–113, 118: *O boni et devoti religiosi, tale debeat esse desertum ad quod relictis mundi vanitate venimus in colendum*.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, ll.132–7, 120.

## APPENDIX I

|                      |     |                       |    |
|----------------------|-----|-----------------------|----|
| Abelard              | 1   | Pseudo-Dionysius      | 3  |
| Adam of Perseigne    | 1   | Drogo of St Nicaise   | 1  |
| Alan of Lille        | 1   | Master Eckhart        | 1  |
| Albert the Great     | 41* | Ernaud of Bonneval    | 1  |
| Alcuin               | 1   | Ernest of Prague      | 1  |
| Alexander of Hales   | 1   | Fulbert of Chartres   | 2  |
| Ambrose              | 1   | Jean Gerson           | 2  |
| Amedeus of Lausanne  | 1   | Geoffrey of Admont    | 1  |
| Anselm of Canterbury | 7   | Gregory the Great     | 27 |
| Anselm of Lucca      | 2   | Guerric of Igny       | 12 |
| Aponius              | 1   | Guigo I               | 1  |
| Augustine            | 23  | William of St Thierry | 1  |
| Basil                | 3   | Haymo of Halberstadt  | 2  |
| Bede                 | 2   | Hervé of Bourg-Dieu   | 2  |
| Benedict             | 1   | Honorius of Autun     | 2  |
| Bernard of Clairvaux | 34  | Hugh of St Victor     | 3  |
| Bernardino of Siena  | 1   | Isidore of Seville    | 7  |
| Boethius             | 2   | Jacob of Voragine     | 3  |
| Bonaventura          | 3   | John of Damascus      | 3  |
| Bruno the Carthusian | 5   | Jerome                | 11 |
| Bruno of Segni       | 1   | Leo the Great         | 3  |

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\* The numerous reference to Albert the Great are particularly to his *Compendium theologicæ veritatis* and *De laudibus beatæ Mariæ Virginis*.

## APPENDIX II

|                       |    |                      |    |
|-----------------------|----|----------------------|----|
| Genesis               | 8  | Daniel               | 7  |
| Exodus                | 5  | Hosea                | 1  |
| Leviticus             | 1  | Joel                 | 3  |
| Numbers               | 1  | Micah                | 2  |
| Deuteronomy           | 3  | Zechariah            | 1  |
| Joshua                | 1  | Malachi              | 1  |
| Judges                | 4  | Matthew              | 23 |
| 1 Samuel              | 2  | Mark                 | 3  |
| 2 Kings               | 2  | Luke                 | 29 |
| Nehemiah              | 2  | John                 | 15 |
| Tobias                | 4  | Acts of the Apostles | 6  |
| Judith                | 1  | Romans               | 12 |
| Esther                | 1  | 1 Corinthians        | 10 |
| 2 Maccabees           | 1  | 2 Corinthians        | 7  |
| Job                   | 11 | Ephesians            | 8  |
| Psalms                | 54 | Philippians          | 4  |
| Proverbs              | 6  | Colossians           | 3  |
| Ecclesiastes          | 1  | 1 Thessalonians      | 1  |
| Canticle of Canticles | 10 | 1 Timothy            | 1  |
| Wisdom                | 4  | Hebrews              | 5  |
| Ecclesiasticus        | 12 | James                | 6  |
| Isaiah                | 19 | 1 Peter              | 1  |
| Lamentations          | 4  | 1 John               | 3  |
| Baruch                | 1  | Apocalypse           | 11 |
| Ezekiel               | 2  |                      |    |

## APPENDIX III

A cursory investigation carried out in the 1960s within the restrictive limits of his strictly contemplative vocation by the then librarian of the charterhouse of Sélignac, Augustin Devaux, revealed the following collections of medieval Carthusian sermons in French public libraries. The list is printed here for the first time with Dom Devaux's permission.

## AVIGNON, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE:

*Avignon, Bibliothèque municipale, 2591*: collection of Latin sermons for each Sunday of the year, 14c., from the charterhouse of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon.

## CHARLEVILLE, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE (all probably from the charterhouse of Mont-Dieu):

*Charleville, Bib. mun., 100*: containing anonymous sermons in French and Latin, 14c.

*Charleville, Bib. mun., 110*: a compilation containing as section 3 "*Sermones pro festis compositi a quodam monacho Cartusiensi*", 14c.

*Charleville, Bib. mun., 113*: a compilation containing as section 3 "*Sermones de tempore*", dating from the 13 and 14c., (as the rest of the ms. is non-Carthusian, only an examination of the sermons can reveal whether they are of Carthusian origin).

*Charleville, Bib. mun., 118*: *Liber sermonum Montis Dei de festis sanctorum*, 14c.

## GRENOBLE, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE (all from the Grande Chartreuse):

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 349* (1129): letters and sermons of Bruno d'Affringues, 4 vols., 17c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 385* (457): treatises and sermons of Jacob of Paradise or from Juterbock, 15c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 429* (458): *sermones capitulares domus Cartusiae*, 16c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 435* (470): homilies for the clothing of postulants, 17c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 521-bis* (469): sermons of Bruno d'Affringues, 17c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 607* (454): collection of anonymous Latin sermons, 15c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 691* (467): chapter sermons of William Bibauce, 16c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 843* (455): collection of forty-nine Latin sermons, c.1300;

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 870* (461): *Matières de sermons à l'usage de chartreux*, 15-16c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 873* (452): collection of Latin sermons under the title *Flores Evangeliorum*, 12c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 1077* (456): collection of Latin *sermones de tempore*, 13c.

*Grenoble, Bib. mun., 1141* (469): chapter sermons in Latin and French; homilies on the occasion of postulants taking the habit, 2 vols., 1619-43.

## MARSEILLES, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE:

*Marseille, Bib. mun., Ab. 53 (240): Liber eruditionis religiosorum* of William Perraut, followed by two collections of sermons dating from the 13c.; the volume belonged originally to the charterhouse of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon, later to that of Marseilles.

## METZ, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE:

*Metz, Bib. mun., 366: sermones dominicales de adventu*, 15c., from the charterhouse of Rettel.

*Metz, Bib. mun., 370: sermons* in Latin and German by a Carthusian of Trier, dated 1333, from the charterhouse of Trier, later Rettel.

*Metz, Bib. mun., 374: sermones hyemales Coerserveldis prioris* (Henry of Coesfeld, prior of the Dutch charterhouse Mount Saint Gertrude), 15c., from the charterhouse of Rettel, destroyed in 1944.

*Metz, Bib. mun., 375: sermones hyemales*, 14c., from the charterhouse of Rettel.

*Metz, Bib. mun., 553: sermons* in German by Jacob of Neukirchen, 17c.

## VALENCIENNES, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE:

*Valenciennes, Bib. mun., 214 (205):* containing on fols. 42–172, 57 Carthusian *sermones de tempore*, 15c.

In "foreign" libraries Devaux noted the following manuscripts:

## BASEL, OEFFENTLICHE BIBLIOTHEK DER UNIVERSITÄT:

*Basel, Oeffen. Bib., A.viii.3: carthusiensium sermones capitulares.*

*Basel, Oeffen. Bib., A.ix.29: carthusiensium sermones in capitulo generali diversis temporibus habitis.*

## BERLIN, STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ:

*Berlin, Staatsbib., lat.qu 637: collationes Capitulares* from the charterhouse of Erfurt.

*Berlin, Staatsbib., Theol.lat.oct.171: opera diversa* of Werner Rolewinck, containing fol. 1: *Sermo ad fratres* in German.

## DARMSTADT, HESSISCHE LANDES- UND HOCHSCHULBIBLIOTHEK:

*Darmstadt, Hess., 11: sermones dominicales* of Henry of Dissen, dated 1460, from the charterhouse of Cologne.

*Darmstadt, Hess., 403: sermones hiemales de sanctis* of Henry of Coesfeld, from the charterhouse of Cologne.

*Darmstadt, Hess., 710, fols. 121–49: Sermones capitulares* of Werner Rolewinck, from the charterhouse of Cologne.

*Darmstadt, Hess., 1075, 1076, 1079, 1085: various collections* of sermons attributed to Henry of Dissen, from the charterhouse of Cologne.

*Darmstadt, Hess., 1230: sermones capitulares juxta morem ordinis carthusiensis.*

*Darmstadt, Hess., 1248: sermons* for the Sundays in the year of Henry of Dissen.



*Darmstadt, Hess.*, 2276: contains among other items *Sermones* by Henry of Calcar.

ERFURT, WISSENSHAFTLICHE ALLGEMEINBIBLIOTHEK:

*Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek*, MS. C.E. 8° 28a, *collationes capitulares*, from the charterhouse of Erfurt.

ERFURT, DOMARCHIV:

*Erfurt, Domarchiv, Theol.11*: sermons on the Blessed Virgin by John Hagen.

GRAZ, UNIVERSITÄTIBLIOTHEK:

*Graz, Universitätsbib.*, 559: *sermones de tempore*.

*Graz, Universitätsbib.*, 742: *sermones de sanctis et de diversis*.

*Graz, Universitätsbib.*, 973: *sermones de tempore*.

*Graz, Universitätsbib.*, 1083: *sermones de sanctis et de tempore*.

*Graz, Universitätsbib.*, 1086: *sermones de tempore et de sanctis* by Mathias Maselhart.

*Graz, Universitätsbib.*, 1147: *exhortationes ad religiosos* by Balthazar Unterstolz, Carthusian of the charterhouse of Seitz.

*Graz, Universitätsbib.*, 1395: includes *sermones per annum*.

INNSBRUCK, UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK:

*Innsbruck, Universitätsbib.*, 86: *sermones capitulares* from the charterhouse of Schnals.

*Innsbruck, Universitätsbib.*, 246: *sermones* by Henry the Carthusian.

The following manuscripts also contain sermons, but only an examination can ascertain whether they are Carthusian:

*Innsbruck, Universitätsbib.*, 72, 77, 106, 122, 140, 143, 173, 179, 190, 191, 205, 208, 220, 221, 231, 241, 258, 302, 303, 305, 307.

KÖLN, HISTORISCHES ARCHIV DER STADT KÖLN:

*Köln, Historisches Archiv*, W.167: *sermones capitulares ad carthusienses* of Henry of Dissen.

*Köln, Historisches Archiv*, X.119, fols. 135–64: various sermons, including two held at the General Chapter

LONDON, BRITISH LIBRARY:

*London, BL, Arundel 3766*: sermons by Adam the Carthusian.

OXFORD, BODLEIAN LIBRARY:

*Oxford, Bodl. Lib., Hamilton 47*: *collationes capitulares* from the charterhouse of Erfurt.

## PADOVA: BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSITARIA:

*Padova, Biblioteca universitaria, 772*: anonymous sermons.

*Padova, Biblioteca universitaria, 1691*: forty-three anonymous sermons.

*Padova, Biblioteca universitaria, 1893*: *sermones dominicales pro conversis de tempore*.

*Padova, Biblioteca universitaria, 2080*: anonymous sermons, followed by sermons of Florentinus.

*Padova, Biblioteca universitaria, 2209*: anonymous sermons, all from the charterhouse of Schnals.

## TRIER, STADTBIBLIOTHEK:

*Trier, Stadtbib., 228*: fols. 1–216, *variorum cartusianorum conceptus et sermones*—from fol. 147 the names of the authors are indicated.

*Trier, Stadtbib., 238*: *sermones* by Henry of Coesfeld.

*Trier, Stadtbib., 240, 243, 245*: anonymous sermons.

*Trier, Stadtbib., 277*: *sermones de tempore*, including one by Peter Eselebeck, prior of Trier.

*Trier, Stadtbib., 295, 302*: anonymous *sermones de sanctis*.

*Trier, Stadtbib., 315, 270*: *homiliae in lectiones V.T. et epistolarum B. Pauli*—all apparently from the charterhouse of Trier.

## WEIMAR, STAATSBIBLIOTHEK:

*Weimar, qu. 43*: *collationes capitulares*, from the charterhouse of Erfurt.

Further collections are recorded in Th. Petreius, *Bibliotheca Cartusiana*, (Cologne 1609).

## APPENDIX IV

Carthusian sermons located in the archives of the Grande Chartreuse (the numeration of the manuscripts is currently in the process of revision):

**D 1061:** *sermones capitulares cartusiae* from the charterhouse of Vacluse.

**D 1062:** *sermones solennes* of Henry of Coesfeld, prior of the charterhouse of Mount St. Gertrude in Holland. *Collationes capitulares* of M. Creutzer, dated 1508.

**1064:** sermons delivered at the general chapter 1599–1749, in 4 vols.

**1065:** chapter sermons of William Bibauce, dated 1608.

**D 1065:** *conciones dominicales* of Huber of the charterhouse of Buxheim, 17c.

**D 1066:** *conciones* in the handwriting of Gaillard, prior of the charterhouse of Valbonne, but the last is by Lion, prior of Cahors, 17c.

**D 1070:** *sermones in festis solemnioribus ordinis cartusiensis* by Mittner, from the charterhouse of Ittingen, dated 1619.

**D 1072:** sermons in Latin and French.

The charterhouse of Sélignac possesses the manuscript 50 which contains twenty-four sermons preached at the charterhouse of Castres, 1748–61.

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PART THREE

THE *CURA MONIALIUM* IN GERMANY AND ENGLAND



## SERMONS FOR NUNS OF THE DOMINICAN OBSERVANCE MOVEMENT

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Researching German-language sermons from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries means reading literature that was meant mostly for religious women. In particular, the Dominicans in charge of the *cura monialium* produced an enormous number of sermons which were often copied in the nunneries where they were preached and were used in their written form as spiritual edification in the absence of the confessor.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, nunneries had two heydays: the first heyday at the beginning of the fourteenth century resulted from the religious movements of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries which led to a multitude of foundations of convents. In the beginning, those convents were often free communities of religious women like the beguines, but as time passed, many of them were incorporated into the mendicant orders. In the two *nationes* Alsace and Swabia of the Dominican Province of Teutonia at the beginning of the fourteenth century, twenty Dominican friaries were responsible for the *cura* of sixty-three Dominican women's convents.<sup>1</sup> The mass movement to join convents posed a logistical problem for the carrying out of the *cura monialium* and for housing. Most of the convents introduced entry restrictions; very often only women from wealthy backgrounds who could buy themselves the necessary books for prayer and mass were accepted. This first heyday of the Dominican women's convents is marked by the famous collections of "lives of nuns",

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers include convents which lived under the second rule of the Dominicans, but were incorporated only after 1303 (five convents), as well as convents of religious women living as tertiaries (twelve convents). For a list of the Dominican women's convents and the convents under Dominican care, see P. Hieronymus Wilms OP, *Das älteste Verzeichnis der deutschen Dominikanerinnenklöster*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland 24 (Leipzig, 1928).



and the first vernacular products of the *cura monialium*: the German sermons of Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler. The second high point for Dominican convents occurred in the first half of the fifteenth century. In terms of numbers it concerned only a few convents and it originated with the so-called Observance movement.

The Observance movement tried to reinstate the ideals of monastic living and for this reason looked back to the roots of its own order. This paper is concerned with the question of how this process of reform influenced the production and transmission of literature, especially vernacular sermons, and how it shaped the religiosity of the nuns, about which we learn by reading these sermons. This study concentrates on sermons transmitted in the Observance movement. One may ask how a paper on vernacular mendicant sermons fits into the present context of monastic preaching. The answer lies in the fact that the circumstances of preaching in an Observant women's convent are comparable to those in a convent of the monastic orders. One of the determining conditions for the setting of monastic sermons is also present in the setting of the preaching in Dominican convents during the two periods under consideration—the sermons were preached in an enclosed convent.

The desire of many women to lead a pious life forced the Dominicans to engage themselves in the religious welfare of such women; this is the case for both heydays of the Dominican convents. The *cura monialium* for the Dominicans did not only mean hearing confession, but also preaching in the convents. The sermons were given in German and also written in German so that the sisters could use them for reading at table and private reading. This was very important considering the small number of men's religious houses which had the spiritual responsibility for so many convents. To a certain extent, the nun's ability to read sermons was more important than her listening to them because the confessor could not come to the convent as frequently as would have been necessary to satisfy the nuns' hunger for the word of God.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the nuns, most lay-people were not educated

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<sup>2</sup> Information about the significance of the written availability of sermons preached in the convent is provided by the transmission of sermons in the convents themselves, the so-called "house-transmission" (*Hausüberlieferung*). Examples for this can be found in almost every literarily active women's

enough to read sermons to teach themselves in the absence of the *pater confessorius*. That is why the vast number of Dominican sermons for lay-people are written in Latin. In this form they could be used as sample sermons within the male order. This observation leads to an interesting conclusion with respect to monastic preaching: the "monastic" sermons of the Dominicans, that is sermons which were meant for cloistered nuns, were given and written in German, whereas sermons for lay-people were given in German but written in Latin.

A glance at the production and transmission of German literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries shows that although an essential part of the literature was written in the fourteenth century, the transmission is concentrated in the fifteenth century. The explosion in literary production of the fourteenth century is followed by an explosion in transmission in the fifteenth century. This intense level of literary transmission is closely linked with the religious reform movements of the late middle ages.<sup>3</sup> After a century in which people had experienced existential threats like schisms, war, and the Black Death, leading both to a decay of moral standards and a need for religious consolation, the leaders of the church and of the orders recognized the necessity to regain acceptance and respect for the orders. By the fourteenth century, a large number of convents had turned into a kind of private institution in which life did not necessarily differ from life outside the convent: nuns did not remain in seclusion, they brought their own servants, clothes and furniture to the convent, and maintained

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convent of the fifteenth century. See Andreas R  ther and Hans-Jochen Schiewer, "Die Predigthandschriften des Stra  burger Dominikanerinnenklosters St. Nikolaus in undis. Historischer Bestand, Geschichte, Vergleich," in *Die deutsche Predigt im Mittelalter. Internationales Symposium am Fachbereich Germanistik der Freien Universit  t Berlin vom 3.-6. Oktober 1989*, eds. Volker Mertens and Hans-Jochen Schiewer (T  bingen, 1992) 169-93, especially 185-93; Monika Costard, "Zwischen Mystik und Moraldidaxe. Deutsche Predigten des Fraterherren Johannes Veghe und des Dominikaners Konrad Schlatter in Frauenkl  stern des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Ons Geestelijk erf* 69 (1995) 235-59.

<sup>3</sup> For the connection between religious reform movements and literary production see the publications by Werner Williams-Krapp: "Ordensreform und Literatur im 15. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 4 (1986/87) 41-51; "Frauenmystik und Ordensreform im 15. Jahrhundert," in *Literarische Interessenbildung im Mittelalter. DFG-Symposium 1991*, ed. Joachim Heinzle (Stuttgart, Weimar, 1994) 301-13; "Observanzbewegungen, monastische Spiritualit  t und geistliche Literatur im 15. Jahrhundert," *Internationales Archiv f  r Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 20 (1995) 1-15.

contact with the outer world. Because of this untenable situation nearly all orders developed reform movements which started at the end of the fourteenth century and reached their peak between 1430 and 1500. The example of the Observance movement of the Dominicans shows that only a small fraction, around ten percent, of men's and women's religious houses accepted (or were forced to accept) the introduction of the so-called "strict Observance". The reformed women's convents are of special interest for the transmission of German literature in the fifteenth century, because nearly ninety percent of German manuscripts owned by convents of the monastic, mendicant, and canonical orders come from this very small number of reformed women's convents.

The enforcement of the strict Observance was not easy for the superiors of the order. Only very few friars and nuns were willing to live under strict rules and—in the case of the women—in strict enclosure. In many religious houses men and women alike used force to hinder the reformers from entering their institutions. One of these cases, the reform of the convent of St Katharina in Nuremberg, is well documented. The Dominican friary in Nuremberg had already been reformed in 1396.<sup>4</sup> Two of the most important Dominicans of their time were prior and subprior in that convent: Konrad of Prussia, who was the initiator of the Observance movement in the Dominican province Teutonia, and Johannes Mulberg, a preacher and propagandist for the Observance movement. In order to reform the women's convent, the first thing Konrad of Prussia had to do was to acquire a papal bull giving him permission to introduce reform. Armed with this bull, and together with members of the town-council and some Dominicans, he went into the convent and demanded obedience and strict enclosure from the nuns. When the nuns did not obey, the men tried to tie them up. One of the sisters said she would not let anyone touch her but her cousin, a citizen of Nuremberg. The ensuing scene is described by Johannes Meyer, a fifteenth-century chronicler of the Dominican order:

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<sup>4</sup> For the following description of events compare Johannes Meyer, *Buch der Reformacio Predigerordens, Buch iv und v*, ed. Benedictus Maria Reichert, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland* 3 (Leipzig, 1908) 12–4. See also, Walter Fries, "Kirche und Kloster zu St. Katharina in Nürnberg," *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 25 (Nürnberg, 1924) 19–21.

When the same patrician went in and wanted to do as she had said, and bent down to her feet, she violently lifted her foot with wickedness and kicked the venerable man so ferociously that he fell backwards onto the ground.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently this lady had an account to settle with her cousin and her violence stirred up the whole convent so much that the reformers had to leave without having achieved their aim. From then on, the nuns organized their resistance and obtained information about their rights. They closed the convent against friars and members of the town-council. But, unfortunately, craftsmen who worked in the convent let the group of reformers into the convent again. This time each one carried a little sack of flour with him to throw into the women's eyes so that they could not fight. But when the Dominicans entered the convent, they were seen. Two of the sisters took a crucifix to bang it on the prior's head, and although he intended to suffer this stoically, he was saved by members of the council. When the bull was read aloud, fighting broke out again and this time the Dominican friars won with the help of the flour. Strict enclosure was introduced and obedience demanded under threat of excommunication. Luckily for the sisters, they gained a letter from the master general of the order in Rome saying that they could not be forced into a strict way of life against their will. This apparently meant that they were told to live in seclusion, but that they could keep their comfortable beds, rich clothing, good food, and other luxuries. Life in St Katharina probably continued without much change as is suggested by a plea in 1398 for absolution for several nuns who went to the public bath.<sup>6</sup>

In the next three decades only a few nunneries in the province of Teutonia were reformed, but the influence of the Observance movement was growing. More and more women, who wanted to take religious living seriously, were seeking guidance and spirituality in an enclosed convent. Because in the whole region of the *natio* Swabia there was not one reformed convent, several women from Nuremberg emigrated to the Alsace to join the reform convent of Schönensteinbach. This convent, founded in 1397, was the first Dominican convent to obey the strict Observance. The

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<sup>5</sup> Johannes Meyer, *Buch der Reformacio Predigerordens*, Buch IV und V, 13: *Do gieng der selb burger und wolt tûn, daz sy gesprochen hatt, und naigt sich zû yren füßen, so hebt sy starcklichen yren füß uf mit freffel und stost den erwidigen man so grimiklichen, daz er hinder sich fiel uff daz ertrich.*

<sup>6</sup> Walter Fries, *Kirche und Kloster*, 21.

consequences of this move for Nuremberg were unfavorable: Nuremberg lost the property of wealthy widows and the investments of families who wanted to support the convent in which their relatives lived. Since there was another convent of Dominican sisters near Nuremberg, the convent of Engelthal, the town-council started to give serious support to the Dominican reformers in their efforts to introduce the strict Observance in St Katharina. The decisive factor was apparently that a widow of one of the richest families intended to join the convent of Schönensteinbach. But when she prepared for the journey, the town-council objected to the fact

that such a lady wanted to go so far from them, since before this also many other ladies with great wealth had moved from the town to Steinbach.<sup>7</sup>

When the lady said she sought God and spiritual living and just wanted to live in a convent where order was respected, the council asked the Dominican provincial for his support and wrote a letter to the convent of Schönensteinbach asking them to send reliable sisters, who could teach the nuns of St Katharina to live under the rules of the strict order. When these ten reformer-nuns, among them several of Nuremberg origin, arrived in Nuremberg, the nuns of St Katharina were initially unwilling to let them into the convent, and the chronicles say that the ten nuns stayed for eight days in the house of a female citizen of the town. How exactly the sisters in St Katharina were persuaded that they should accept the reform, we shall never know, but some took up the offer to join other Dominican convents near Nuremberg, and apart from that the convent kept several privileges. The key-positions of St Katharina, which are prioress, subprioress, mistress of novices, *raderin* (the person who turns the wheel to admit provisions to the enclosed part of the convent), *uberhorerin* (the person who controls communications between members of the convent and the outside world), were filled by the exemplary Observance-nuns of Schönenstein-

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<sup>7</sup> Johannes Meyer, *Buch der Reformacio Predigerordens, Buch IV und V*, 67: *daz an söliche frow, so ver von in wolt faren, won vor och vil frowen mit grossem güt uss der statt gen Stainbach komen warent*. For the following description of events see Johannes Meyer, *Buch der Reformacio Predigerordens, Buch IV und V*, 60–5. See also Karin Schneider, "Die Bibliothek des Katharinenklosters in Nürnberg," in *Studien zum städtischen Bildungswesen des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Bernd Moeller et al. (Göttingen, 1983) 75–6.

bach, who taught the others what it meant to live in a reformed Dominican convent.

In this way the resistance of the Nuremberg nuns was finally broken—perhaps, unluckily for the opposing nuns, but luckily for us, because in the following years St Katharina developed one of the biggest libraries of German religious texts. A medieval catalogue from the years 1455 to 1500 has survived. There are 352 German volumes listed. But not all of the surviving German manuscripts are listed in the catalogue, nor are the Latin books which are mainly liturgical. This means that at the end of the fifteenth century the library probably contained 500 to 600 volumes.<sup>8</sup> The sisters from Schönensteinbach brought with them books from their own library for the readings at table and for the private edification of the women. As time went by, St Katharina itself developed into an exemplary convent of the Dominican Observance and for its part sent delegations to support the reform of other convents. Those delegations in turn brought books with them to the newly reformed convents so that a network of literary exchange developed. The literary exchange was not restricted to reformed Dominican convents, but also included reformed nunneries of other orders.<sup>9</sup>

The example of St Katharina in Nuremberg shows what the essential aspects of the Observance reform in a nunnery were: strict enclosure and a life that follows the statutes of the order. Clothing is shared, all luxury removed. Contacts with the outer world can be continued only by using the grill in the presence of a controlling person, the *uberhorerin*. The sisters must have a useful occupation inside the convent, which, in addition to prayer and meditation, especially includes writing. Evidence for this is given by a colophon from a late fifteenth-century manuscript. It is a folio-

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<sup>8</sup> Karin Schneider, "Die Bibliothek des Katharinenklosters," 71.

<sup>9</sup> For the literary exchange between reformed convents of the fifteenth century see the following publications: Werner Fechter, *Deutsche Handschriften des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts aus der Bibliothek des ehemaligen Augustinerchorfrauenstifts Inzigkofen*, Arbeiten zur Landeskunde Hohenzollerns 15 (Sigmaringen, 1997) 183–7; Siegfried Ringler, *Viten- und Offenbarungsliteratur in Frauenklöstern des Mittelalters. Quellen und Studien*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen 72 (München, 1980); Karin Schneider, "Beziehungen zwischen den Dominikanerinnenklöstern Nürnberg und Altenhohenau im ausgehenden Mittelalter. Neue Handschriftenfunde," in *Würzburger Prosastudien II. Untersuchungen zur Literatur und Sprache des Mittelalters. Kurt Ruh zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Kesting (München, 1975) 211–8.

volume of 304 folios written in a very clear and neat hand. In the colophon the writer, who mentions her name and the date on which she finished the copy, asks the reader for a *Hail Mary*, and then adds very modestly:

If I have not written the book well, nevertheless I have spent my time in obedience.<sup>10</sup>

The reasons for the enforcement of the Observance reform were various: as well as reasons within the order, the desire of religious women to lead a life in retirement from the world was decisive. It is Catherine of Siena (†1380) who inspired the master general of the order, Raymond of Capua, who for a long time was her confessor, to introduce the Observance reform. But one should not overlook the economic interests of the towns, which had gained strength in the fourteenth century. Their interests often played the most important role in the enforcement of reform.<sup>11</sup> It was not only a matter of preventing an exodus of capital by enabling wealthy women, who wanted to live in strict enclosure, to live in a reformed convent. There were other benefits for the towns in having a reformed convent in their midst. We know, for example, that in the case of St Katharina in Nuremberg the town itself was the trustee of the enormous amount of money the convent gained by selling their luxury articles. The rule of poverty was not followed by most of the convents of the mendicant orders. Many of them were given vast amounts of money in inheritances, donations or life annuities. To prevent the loss of money for the town and its citizens, the towns named procurators, who managed the financial affairs together with the convents. But even better from the town's point of view was a reform of the convents that guaranteed strict obedience to the rule of poverty. Even if in the end many reformed men's religious houses did not adhere to complete poverty—women's convents could not do this anyway—the advantages the towns gained by the introduction of the Observance reform were significant: the town acquired greater influence over the finances of the convents and was able to prevent loss of wealth.

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<sup>10</sup> Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. germ. 2° 741, fol. 333va: *hab ich die geschrift nit güt geschriben / so hab ich aber min zit in der geharsam vertriben.*

<sup>11</sup> Eugen Hillenbrand, "Die Observantenbewegung in der deutschen Ordensprovinz der Dominikaner," in *Reformbemühungen und Observanzbestrebungen im spätmittelalterlichen Ordenswesen*, ed. Kaspar Elm, Berliner Historische Studien 14, Ordensstudien VI (Berlin, 1989) 219–71, at 240–6.

I will now return to the literature transmitted within the scope of the transformation in the way Dominican convents operated. Until now not much research has been done to determine the actual share of literature from the first heyday of Dominican women's convents in the manuscripts which are transmitted in Observance convents. This question can be examined in the example of one collection of sermons, known as the "High Alemannic sermons".<sup>12</sup> The manuscript in which this collection survives is typical of those of the Observance movement. Though it is written in the dialect of Bavaria, one can discern traces of Alemannic, which suggests that it originated in the Alemannic central area. As was shown above in the case of the reform of the convent of St Katharina in Nuremberg, the Observance movement started from Schönensteinbach in the Alemannic dialect area, spreading its influence—and the typical Observance literature—into Bavaria and Austria.

What can one say about the religious and spiritual content of the "High Alemannic sermons", which were read at table or in private? Where does their origin lie, both with regard to dating and to theology? And what made them interesting for the nuns of the Observance movement?

The collection contains fifty sermons and is transmitted together with an epistolary, sermons from the thirteenth century, and a wide range of treatises, *dicta*, and contemplations, amongst which we find the first seven chapters of the *vita* of Eckhart's pupil Henry Suso. The language of all the texts except for the epistolary shows Alemannic traces. The sermon collection consists of sermons *de tempore* and *de sanctis*, sermons on the Eucharist, the Last Judgment, the Passion of Christ, on the seven kingdoms and on King David. The sermons *de tempore* include sermons on Christmas, the Circumcision of Christ, Epiphany, the Sundays and holy days in Lent, Easter and in the weeks before Pentecost. The incomplete *de sanctis*-cycle provides sermons on Nicholas, Stephen, John the Evangelist, the Purification, Nativity and Assumption of Mary, Blaise, Agatha, Mary Magdalen, James the Greater, John the Baptist, Laurence, Catherine of Siena, Margaret, Peter and Paul, Dominic, Peter the Martyr, and All Saints', and All Souls'. The

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<sup>12</sup> Karin Morvay and Dagmar Grube, *Bibliographie der deutschen Predigt des Mittelalters. Veröffentlichte Predigten*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen 47 (München, 1974) 54–5.



choice of occasions does not seem to be specifically Dominican: only the sermons on Dominic, Catherine of Siena, and Peter the Martyr OP make one think of Dominican origin. But the sermons themselves give us hints of their Dominican provenance: where *exempla* are used to illustrate the argument, the protagonists—with a few exceptions—are Dominicans. Thus in the sermon for the Tuesday after Easter we hear about a melancholy Dominican, whose grief is healed by Christ in a vision. In the sermon for St Dominic's feast day the preacher tells the story of a rich cleric, who the day after he has dreamt of seven wonderful stars, has a vision in which he sees Dominic with six others of his order walking into his class. Another interesting anecdote is that of the French king, who used to come to the Dominican convent in Paris during Lent and preach to the novices about the vanity of worldly pleasures. The preacher of our sermon himself stresses that he was so impressed by the words of the king, that he could not forget them:

I remember a word spoken by the king of France, the most Christian sovereign Christianity ever had in its time. He had the custom, that every Lent he came to our house in Paris, and took the novices and placed them all in front of him, sometimes as many as fifty, and preached to them. And among other words, he said this word: "Dear children, praise our Lord and do not pine for the joys of the world. I have been king for forty years and have had more joys than all of you together, that I know. And in all my days, I did not spend one full day, that was not mingled with deep sorrow." I never forgot these words. Since the worldly joy of such a great lord was mingled in such a way, dear children, remember this, and do not pine for the worldly joys.<sup>13</sup>

This *exemplum* gives us another hint for answering the question of who the author or authors of this sermon-collection were. The one who talks about the king of France<sup>14</sup> is apparently a learned man,

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<sup>13</sup> München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cgm 531, fols. 127va–127vb: *Ich gedenck ains worts das sprach der chünig von frankreich der christenist fürst was den dye christenhait ye gewan bei iren zeyten. der het ainen syten das er albeg in der vasten ze Paris in vnser haus chom vnd nam denn dye nouitzen vnd setzt sy all für sich der etwenn fünffzig was vnd predigat yn vnd vndern andern worten sprach er dise wort "liebe chind lobet onsern herren vnd lasst ewch nit iamern nach der wellt freyd Jch pin vierczig iar chünig gewesen vnd han mer freyd gehebt dan ir allsampnet das ways ich Vnd in allen meinen tagen do vertraib ich nie ganczen tag er wär vermischet mit herczenleycher betrubi." Dis wortes vergas ich nye Seyt das ainen also grossem herren weltleych freud also vermischt was Liebe chind hier an gedenkt vnd lat ewch nit iameren nach der wellt freyd.*

<sup>14</sup> If one takes the hints concerning the king of France given in the *exemplum* seriously, there is only one possible identity: it must be St Louis, who

who visited the Dominican *studium generale* in Paris. We gain information about some of the other authors from parallel transmissions.<sup>15</sup>

Three sermons, the sermons on John the Baptist, James the Greater, and John the Evangelist, form part of two other collections, which concentrate on John the Evangelist and John the Baptist.<sup>16</sup> There those three sermons are attributed to named authors. With respect to other namings in those collections we can locate the origin of the High Alemannic sermons in the circles of learned Dominicans in the area of Constance and Zurich in the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Some of the authors are characterized as "lector" (*lesemeister*)—someone who was responsible for the studies in his monastery. Others are referred to as "father", which must be regarded as a statement about their function as *pater confessarius* for the convent in which they preached. Apart from that it is often stressed that the preacher in question has studied in Paris. This is obviously a reference to the Dominican *studium generale* there. This aspect relates to the significance of the Dominican order as a scholarly order. The impression of learned theologians that we

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died in 1270 and was canonized only 27 years later. If our preacher really heard him preaching in Paris, the date of his birth cannot be later than 1250. This would fit the assumed time of composition of the sermon in the beginning of the fourteenth century. The protagonist of another *exemplum* of the same collection quoted below, Wichmann of Arnstein, died at the age of about eighty in the same year as St Louis.

<sup>15</sup> An extensive survey of the transmissions in parallel of the "High Alemannic sermons" is given by Nicolai Pahne in Hans-Jochen Schiewer et al., *Ein dominikanischer Johannes-Libellus. Texte und Untersuchungen* (Tübingen, forthcoming).

<sup>16</sup> These three sermons also form part of the so-called "Pommersfelden Johannes-Libellus", mentioned above in note 15 (Pommersfelden, Gräflisch Schönbornsche Bibliothek, Ms 120 [olim 2868]). In addition, the sermon on John the Evangelist is transmitted in a manuscript of the Universitätsbibliothek Basel (cod. A VI 38). Parallel transmissions also give the assumed dating more stability: six of our "High-Alemannic sermons" are transmitted together with legends of the "Solothurn legendary" in manuscript G<sup>2</sup> II 58 of the Universitätsbibliothek Basel. The translation of these legends into German has been connected to the Dominican lector Marquard Biberli, who is documented to have lived in Zurich between 1320 and 1326. The latest publication discussing the authorship of Marquard Biberli for the "Solothurn legendary" is by Karl-Ernst Geith, "Marchwart Biberli und das Solothurner Legendar Cod. S. 451," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 111 (1982) 9–21.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Hans-Jochen Schiewer, "Die beiden Sankt Johannsen, ein dominikanischer Johannes Libellus und das literarische Leben im Bodenseeraum um 1300," *Oxford German Studies* 22 (1993) 21–54.

gain from the characterization of the different preachers is confirmed by the scholarly structure of the sermons in which the preacher usually follows his *dispositio*, which is not necessarily the case in vernacular sermons of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. An analysis of the usage of authorities in the sermon on John the Evangelist shows that although various Fathers of the church or teachers are quoted, the preacher mainly uses a sermon by Peter Damian. Nevertheless he is not satisfied with a simple translation. On the contrary, he plays with his source and uses different passages in another order and context, so that the sermon is more than a learned *compilatio*, it is a work in its own right.

Yet another *exemplum* gives us a hint of the spiritual home of our sermons. It gives a detailed description of a vision and names the visionary: Wichmann of Arnstein—a Dominican of the second generation, who was very likely the first *pater confessarius* of the well-known German visionary, Mechthild of Magdeburg (†1282):<sup>18</sup>

There was a friar from the order of Preachers. His name was Wichmann. He was prior in Ruppín. One day, while he was saying mass, he stood in the choir on the steps and prayed devoutly, and thought about what our Lord did for us, and spoke the response "Descendit de coelis", and reminded our Lord how he was sent through mercy from the heights of his Father into the virgin womb of our Lady, and while he was in this devotion, he felt such a great heart's desire to see our Lord as well disposed as he was in his humanity. And while he had this desire, he saw our Lord Jesus Christ to the right, by the altar and like a beautiful youth; and when he had seen his face very well, he turned around and let him see both his sides; and when he had seen him very well, our

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<sup>18</sup> Hans Neumann's assumption that Wichmann was the "only friend" (*da nieman min frünt was denne ein mensche alleine*), mentioned in Mechthild's visions [Hans Neumann ed., *Mechthild von Magdeburg, "Das fließende Licht der Gottheit"*. Bd. 1: *Text, besorgt von Gisela Vollmann-Profe*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen 100 (München, 1990) iv 2,21] has been supported by Kurt Ruh, "Mechthild von Magdeburg und Wichmann von Arnstein," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 120 (1991) 322–5. His suggestion that Wichmann might have been Mechthild's confessor while she was in Magdeburg, gains strength from the fact that Heinrich of Halle was his pupil. Up to Ruh's publication it was Heinrich who was thought to have been the only pastor having influenced and supervised Mechthild's visions and their writing down. After 1260 Heinrich became lector in the convent of Neuruppin, which was a new foundation by Wichmann of Arnstein. At the same time, Mechthild's brother was subprior in that convent. See Hans Neumann, "Mechthild von Magdeburg," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh et al., vol. 6 (Berlin, New York, 21987) col. 260–70.

Lord Jesus lifted his hand and gave him his blessing; and he did not see him any more ...<sup>19</sup>

In the second third of the thirteenth century Wichmann of Arnstein was one of the most influential people in the Dominican province of Saxonia. Thanks to his commitment and the financial power of his family, which like the family of Mechthild and the other famous visionaries of the nunnery in Helfta, was among the highest of the nobility, many Dominican convents were founded in that province. Wichmann himself became prior of the convent in Neuruppin, where he installed the only Dominican school in the whole province. The *exemplum* of Wichmann in the collection of the High Alemannic sermons constitutes a link between the mystical circles of Magdeburg and Helfta in the North East of the German-speaking area and the mystical Dominican circles in the Alemannic area. We already know of a passage in one of Johannes Tauler's sermons where he mentions Wichmann and one of his visions. Apart from that, there is the fact that we do not have a Low German copy of Mechthild of Magdeburg's visions, but only an Alemannic one with Low German traces which dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century. This shows that links can be proved for the two centers of female visionaries. Most of the

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<sup>19</sup> München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cgm 531, fols. 49va-49vb. The vision continues with the appearance of the Virgin Mary, who shows the same behavior towards Wichmann as her son. Furthermore, we are told that Wichmann marked the spots where he had seen Jesus and Mary, with two bricks and wrote "*hic hic*" on them. Nobody understood what he was doing because he did not tell anybody about his vision. But he wrote it down and entrusted this *prieß* (letter) to a lay-brother named Simon, who passed it on to the prior of the convent after Wichmann's death. This *exemplum* is the *Miraculum primum* of the *Miracula et collationes fratris Wichmannis*, which is otherwise only transmitted in Latin. If our version is a translation from the Latin, it is a quite free translation. In respect of the audience of our sermons—religious women with mystic interests—it is striking that the Latin *Miraculum*, unlike the German version, stresses the fact that Wichmann saw Jesus and Mary not with his bodily eyes (*non oculis corporalibus*), but with the eyes of his heart (*sed oculis cordis*). Apart from that, the Latin transmission neither provides us with the information about the bricks, nor about the manner of composition and publication of the vision. If we considered the German version to be authentic regarding these points, it could offer us the first hint towards the origin of this *Miraculum*, which is otherwise not clear. The *Miracula* are printed in F. Winter, "Legende über Wichmann von Arnstein," *Geschichtsblätter für Stadt und Land Magdeburg* 11 (1876) 180–91, and in M.A. van den Oudenrijn, "Miracula quaedam et collationes fratris Wichmannis," *Analecta Praemonstratensia* 6 (1930) 5–53. More information about Wichmann von Arnstein is provided by Fritz Büniger, *Zur Mystik und Geschichte der märkischen Dominikaner* (Berlin, 1926) 1–35.

collections of the "lives of the nuns", which describe the history of a women's convent by telling the visionary life of the sisters, originated in the Alemannic area. They were written at the same time as the High Alemannic sermons, in the first half of the fourteenth century. But also like the High Alemannic sermons they are transmitted in manuscripts from the fifteenth century, mostly in women's convents of the Observance movement.

What conclusions can be drawn from the above observations? It seems as if, at the beginning of the Observance movement, the reformers had no other option but to fall back on earlier literature. Like the manuscript in which the High Alemannic sermons are transmitted, we find many fifteenth-century manuscripts which consist exclusively of texts from the first half of the fourteenth century. There is enough evidence to assume that those manuscripts form the earliest productions of text compilations for, or even by, nuns of the Observance movement. That the nuns themselves compiled manuscripts is not unlikely, bearing in mind that the community of nuns of the Observance movement form a kind of élite.<sup>20</sup> Of the first prioress of the convent of Schönensteinbach, Claranna of Hohenburg, Johannes Meyer tells us:

She understood the holy writings so attentively, that she could translate the text of difficult Latin books into orderly German; and she was likewise in many other good things an able and gifted person.<sup>21</sup>

Other nuns of the Observance movement were so modest that they chose to be lay-sisters, although they could read and write Latin:

There also was in the convent of Schönensteinbach another lay-sister, named Adelhaid Vögtin ... and she was pious and ardent towards God and was of tall, marvelous, powerful stature; God helped her, through a dear blessed friar of the Dominican order, into the convent of Schönensteinbach, where she became a lay-

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<sup>20</sup> For the standard of education of nuns in observant convents see Burkhard Hasebrink, "Tischlesung und Bildungskultur im Nürnberger Katharinenkloster. Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Rekonstruktion," in *Schule und Schüler im Mittelalter. Beiträge zur europäischen Bildungsgeschichte des 9. bis 15. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Martin Kintzinger et al. (Köln, 1996) 187–216.

<sup>21</sup> Johannes Meyer, *Buch der Reformatio Predigerordens, Buch I–III*, ed. Benedictus Maria Reichert, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland 2 (Leipzig, 1909) 63: *Sy verstünd so mercklich die hailgen geschriff, daz sy von sweren latynschen büchern den text zu ordenlichem tüschen bringen kond, und sust in vil andren güten sachen an wol geschickter und wol begabter mensch was.*

sister, although she could read German and Latin and write, and kept with such assiduity the holy observance of the order and especially the rule of silence, that none of the sisters could ever notice that she ever broke her silence in the kitchen, nor outside the kitchen, although she was responsible for the kitchen for twelve years or more, and was the best cook there ever was in that convent ...<sup>22</sup>

These learned nuns looked for the roots of spirituality in the history of their order and very often of their own convent. Thus, for instance, they copied the descriptions of the lives of the nuns of the first half of the fourteenth century, their revelations and mystical experiences. But apparently the figure of the visionary fitted into the program of the Observance movement only as a historical pious person, because visions built a bridge between God and one person, but not between God and the community of a convent. And community and not individuality was one of the essential aspects of the Observance program. Because the reformers wanted obedience and respect for the rules of the community, many texts of the fourteenth century were revised. Thus another type of manuscript developed, containing a mixture of earlier literature and original Observance texts. This is the case in a Berlin manuscript, in which four of the High Alemannic sermons are transmitted together with sermons which were preached at the time of the Council of Basle (1431–49) in the reformed Dominican women's convent there.<sup>23</sup> Often it is not easy to differentiate between the earlier and later texts, because of the revisions. Another aspect of this supervision was the recommendation that the main reception of the Bible should occur through the hearing and reading of sermons.<sup>24</sup> The "Book of Offices" (*Ämterbuch*) describes in German language the responsibilities of the different offices in a Dominican

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<sup>22</sup> Johannes Meyer, *Buch der Reformacio Predigerordens, Buch I–III*, 100: *Es ist och in dem closter Schönenstainbach gewesen an ander lay swöster, genamt Adelhaid Vögtin ... und waz von jugent uf gar andechtig und innig zû got und waz ainer langen, herrlichen, starcken person; der half got durch ainen lieben selgen brüder prediger ordens in das [146] closter Schönenstainbach, da sy an lay swöster ward, und kund doch lesen tûsch und latyn und schriben, und hielt mit söllichem fliss die halgen observanc des ordens und besunder die gesetzd der swiglichait, daz kain swöster nie kund gemercken, daz sy yr swigen ye gebrech in der kuchen noch uswendig der kuchen und hielt doch die kuche by XII jâren oder mer, und ist die best köchin gewesen, die in dem selben closter ye gewesen ist ...*

<sup>23</sup> Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. germ. 2° 741.

<sup>24</sup> Werner Williams-Krapp, "Observanzbewegungen, monastische Spiritualität und geistliche Literatur," 10.

women's convent. For his fifteenth-century work, the author Johannes Meyer, used the thirteenth-century *Liber officiorum* of the fifth Dominican master general, Humbert of Romans. There we read about the office of the reader at table:

When a homily is read, she shall let the text of the gospel go before it.<sup>25</sup>

This means that the text of the gospel was immediately commented by the sermon, so that the power of interpretation stayed in the hands of the male *patres confessarii*.

But the spiritual interests and needs of the Observance nuns lie open before us, when we look at the content of sermon-collections like the High Alemannic sermons. Among the main subjects of the sermons are the passion and death of Christ, others concentrate on visionaries like John the Evangelist. The relationship between Christ and John is described and admired in dozens of sermons again and again. The pose in which John leans on Christ's breast at the Last Supper and drinks from Christ's heart the sweetness of love and wisdom, is a symbol for the mystical spirituality which many religious women longed for. It is the *vita contemplativa* which is given preference over the *vita activa*, although the Observance movement tried to restrain these mystical longings to simple prayer and meditation. But the impressive number of manuscripts which transmit this form of mystical spirituality, and also warning letters by Dominican friars against deceptive visions are evidence that the mystical piety of the first Dominican heyday found its revival in the second one of the Observance movement.

I conclude by briefly resuming my main points. The collection of High Alemannic sermons shows that the first reform convents had to reactivate literature from the first half of the fourteenth century, because the production of literature for the Observance movement only started at the beginning of the fifteenth century with Dominicans like Johannes Nider (†1438) who felt responsible for the adequate religious welfare of the Observance sisters. Therefore it comes as no surprise that many compilations found in reformed convents point to the Alemannic center of the Observance as their origin. It is conceivable that many compilations

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<sup>25</sup> I. König, ed., "Die Chronik der Anna von Munzingen. Nach der ältesten Abschrift mit Einleitung und Beilagen," *Freiburger Diöcesan-Archiv* 13 (1880) 129–236, at 205.

which are transmitted in the Bavarian area were produced in the convent of Schönensteinbach. The nuns there probably used literature that they had brought with them when they founded the convent. Five of the first twelve Observance nuns of Schönensteinbach came from the convent of Katharinenthal near Diessenhofen. Except for some liturgical books, nothing survived of the library of this convent, but the collection of the "lives of nuns" of Katharinenthal provides evidence that the convent was one of the key nunneries for mystical life in the Alemannic area in the first half of the fourteenth century. They tell us that Meister Eckhart visited the convent several times. It is also assumed that Henry Suso sought refuge here from 1338/39–1346/49, when Constance, where he was prior of the so-called "Inselkloster", was placed under interdict.<sup>26</sup> In the High Alemannic sermon for the Monday after Easter we find the following passage:

On the day when our Lord rose from the dead, two of his disciples walked from Jerusalem to a town named Emaus, that lies as far from Jerusalem as from Diessenhofen to Schaffhausen.<sup>27</sup>

It will never be possible to prove beyond doubt that the High Alemannic sermons originated in the convent of Diessenhofen. But, as for one of the "Johannes-Libelli", which contains solely texts and sermons on the two Johns and where we find three of our sermons in parallel, the course of transmission from Diessenhofen over Schönensteinbach to the Bavarian Observance convents can be shown to be probable. But more important than the technical questions of transmission are the facts of the female spiritual tradition. Against the will of the male reformers, mystical religiosity, almost forgotten, found a revival in the reformed women's convents. It took its starting point in the old Alemannic center of mysticism and was spread by the exemplary nuns who were sent out to reform other convents, and who brought with them copies of manuscripts with partly mystical content like our High Alemannic sermons.

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<sup>26</sup> See Alois Haas and Kurt Ruh, "Seuse, Heinrich OP," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh et al., vol. 8 (Berlin, New York, 1992) col. 1110–29, at 1111.

<sup>27</sup> München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cgm 531, fol. 49ra: *An dem tag do unser herr erstund von dem tag (!) do giengen seiner junger zwen von Jerusalem ze ainer purg / die hiez Emaus vnd leit von Jerusalem alz verr alz von diessenhofen uncz gen schaffhausen.*



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## PREACHING TO NUNS IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

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After a gap of some sixty years following Eileen Power's monumental work in 1922, *Medieval English Nunneries*,<sup>1</sup> some valuable work has recently been carried out on nuns in medieval England by scholars such as Janet Burton, John Tillotson, Marilyn Oliva, Sally Thompson, and David Bell,<sup>2</sup> as well as numerous studies on the Birgittines of Syon Abbey.<sup>3</sup> Without in any way rendering Power's work redundant, such studies have built on her research and have examined specific periods or particular female religious communities in greater detail. The view of medieval nunneries has not as a consequence been changed utterly but it has been modified and clarified in various respects. No one disputes that late medieval English nunneries were not well endowed with numbers or revenue, that some suffered from inept management, or that levels of education and literacy were low, but studies such as that of Marilyn Oliva on Norwich nunneries puts what is meant

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<sup>1</sup> See Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries c.1275 to 1535* (Cambridge, 1922).

<sup>2</sup> See respectively Janet E. Burton, *The Yorkshire Nunneries in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, Borthwick Paper, No. 56 (York, 1979); John H. Tillotson, *Marrick Priory: A Nunnery in Late Medieval Yorkshire*, Borthwick Paper, No. 75 (York, 1989); Marilyn Oliva, "Aristocracy or Meritocracy?": Office-Holding Patterns in Late Medieval English Nunneries," in *Women in the Church*, Studies in Church History 27, ed. W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford, 1990) 197–208; Sally Thompson, *Women Religious: The Founding of English Nunneries after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1991); Marilyn Oliva, "The Convent and the Community in the Diocese of Norwich from 1350–1540" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1991); Roberta Gilchrist and Marilyn Oliva, *Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia: History and Archaeology c.1100–1540*, Studies in East Anglian History 1 (Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia, 1993); David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, Cistercian Studies Series 158 (Kalamazoo, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Recent studies of St Birgitta of Sweden and the Birgittines, both at Syon and at the mother house at Vadstena, which even include a newly established and specially dedicated journal, *Birgittiana*, are too extensive to list here.

by poverty, size, and organization into a firmer context, and that of David Bell, which is the most important work in the present instance, carefully explains the issue of book ownership.

While most English nunneries were undoubtedly poor and small (over three-quarters had less than £100 as their annual income,<sup>4</sup> and the customary number of nuns in the smaller houses was only twelve, plus a prioress),<sup>5</sup> there was also considerable variety among the some one hundred and forty-four communities. These ranged from the wealthiest and largest establishments, such as the Benedictine house of Shaftesbury in Dorset, which at the time of the suppression had an abbess and fifty-six nuns,<sup>6</sup> and whose valuation was recorded in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (c.1535) as over a £1000 per annum, to nunneries at the lowest point of the scale like the Benedictine priory at Lambley in Northumberland, which had only an income of £5 a year to support six nuns.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, while it is the scandals, both financial and sexual, that make much of Power's work so memorable, it also true, as Jackie Mountain has recently shown, that some nunneries were in a parlous state not purely because of bad management but due to circumstances beyond the nuns' control.<sup>8</sup> Finally, though by Anglo-Saxon standards<sup>9</sup> medieval English nuns were badly educated and had a poor standard of literacy, in this they were just like the rest of the female part of the population.<sup>10</sup> What should be

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<sup>4</sup> This figure derives from Bell's analysis of incomes and acquisitions, *What Nuns Read*, 11. Bell provides some very interesting information and a table of the various assessments at the time of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, 10–2.

<sup>5</sup> See David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales* (London, 1971) 251.

<sup>6</sup> These figures are provided in the section on Syon in Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 265.

<sup>7</sup> For these figures see Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 10–1.

<sup>8</sup> See Jackie Mountain, "Nunnery Finances in the Early Fifteenth Century," in *Monastic Studies II: The Continuity of Tradition*, ed., Joan Loades (Bangor, 1991) 263–72.

<sup>9</sup> See Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 237, where she says: *The Anglo-Saxon period seems ... to have been the only one during which English nuns were at all conspicuous for learning.* It is true, of course, that when Eileen Power discussed learned Anglo-Saxon nuns she was in the main referring to the most learned, and consequently most well-known, nuns of the day, such as the helpers of St Boniface; it is difficult to judge how representative such luminaries were of Anglo-Saxon nuns in general.

<sup>10</sup> The whole issue of female literacy, in the sense of scribal ability, has recently been discussed in V.M. O'Mara, "Female Scribal Ability and Scribal Activity in Late Medieval England: The Evidence?," *Leeds Studies in English*, New Series 27 (1996) 87–130. This is a complex area and it is not appropriate

apparent is that in order to assess literacy in the middle ages it is necessary to separate reading from writing: while very few English women (religious or lay) were able to write,<sup>11</sup> information about book ownership would indicate that some at least could read.<sup>12</sup> In his examination of surviving books owned by and associated with English nuns in the middle ages, David Bell lists one hundred and forty-four manuscripts and seventeen printed books from forty-six houses (out of a total of one hundred and forty-four), as well as miscellaneous records from nineteen others; of these two-thirds were in English and almost half of the works date from the fifteenth century. He notes that many of these consist of vernacular versions of medieval and patristic treatises, as well as original works by writers such as Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and Nicholas Love. He also points out that many of these works were up-to-date and that many derived from the Birgittine house at Syon, which, given its association with learning is unsurprising. There is then sufficient evidence for nuns as owners of books—and presumably readers (though not writers or transcribers)<sup>13</sup>—to enable us to construct a picture of reading in the cloisters, which clearly concentrated on the mystical, the devotional, and above all the vernacular; this offers some incidental but telling insights that will be commented upon later. The obvious question to ask at this point concerns the extent to which David Bell's extensive lists of manuscripts might be used to cast light on the issue of preaching to nuns.

Working through the various indices of works in English, French, and Latin, one finds only about a dozen references to *sermons* associated with convents. These are briefly as follows, with the relevant nunneries and citation in Bell given in brackets:<sup>14</sup> the

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to rehearse the arguments here except to say that of all the cases examined, with the exception of a few signatures, only one definite example of a text written by a female scribe was discovered, a colophon (fol. 55r) at the end of a devotional prayer in London, Lambeth Palace Library, 546, fols. 53v–55r, written by one Birgittine nun for another; for full details see O'Mara, "Female Scribal Ability," 99–100.

<sup>11</sup> See O'Mara, "Female Scribal Ability," where the evidence for this view is fully explored.

<sup>12</sup> For a list of articles on female book ownership see O'Mara, "Female Scribal Ability," 114 at note 18, 124 at note 86.

<sup>13</sup> See O'Mara, "Female Scribal Ability," 99–103, and corresponding notes for a discussion of this issue.

<sup>14</sup> For full information see Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 134–5, 112–3, 158, 130, 216, 187–8, 169–70, 118–9, 203, 185, and 141 respectively.

*Northern Homily Cycle* in Cambridge, University Library, Additional 8335 (Denney, 1); two Anglo-Norman sermons in London, British Library, Egerton 2710 (Derby, 1 d and g); an Anglo-Norman sermon of Maurice de Sully in Oxford, Magdalen College, lat. 41 (Barking, 13 j); and in Latin, two sermons by Alan of Tewkesbury in Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, 887 (Nuneaton, 2 a); a pseudo-Augustine sermon in Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Downside Abbey Library, 26542 (Dartford, 1 e), with a fuller collection of fourteen pseudo-Augustine sermons together with *homilia* by Paul the Deacon, and two other sermons in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 451 (Winchester ?, 4 c); a pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux passion sermon in London, British Library, Additional 24661 (Syon?, 21 d); James of Voragine's *Sermones de tempore*, a reference in a catalogue only (Swine, A 1); Nicolas Denyse's *Gemma praedicatorum* and two books of *Sermones*, again mentioned in a catalogue only (Barking, App. 6 and 10); the *Sermones Amici* printed by Nicholas Kessler in Cambridge, Emmanuel College, 32.6.49, that could have belonged to the brothers or sisters of Syon; the works of Thomas à Kempis, a printed book owned by Dr A.I. Doyle that contains sermons (Syon, B 5d, A 17); and a homiliary in Lincoln, Cathedral Library, 199 (Heynings, 1 d). It is difficult to know what to make of these references; one is surprised that there are so few of them and that the majority of them (with the exception of the first three entries) are in Latin. In truth they do not allow any immediate insights into the issue of sermons and nuns in the middle ages, though their relative scarcity and non-vernacular nature would seem to reveal that nuns may not have had in their convents copies of sermons that they could have used for devotional reading. It is worth noting in passing that six copies of the *Golden Legend*, an English printed version ultimately of James of Voragine's best-seller, the *Legenda aurea*, as well as numerous other saints' lives in English, are recorded, which could have provided appropriate reading material.<sup>15</sup> It may be, however, that the sermons listed here were the sort used by preachers either in compiling their own sermons or to serve as inspiration for them, but this is an hypothesis that cannot be proved. It is clear, therefore, that it is necessary to look elsewhere to find out about sermons preached to

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<sup>15</sup> For a list of these see Index 1 in Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 225, 230 respectively.

nuns in late medieval England. As a starting point, it is useful to consider the opportunities that may have been available for preaching to nuns.

Eileen Power has shown that most monastery rules derived from that of the Benedictines, and has outlined the strict routine, revolving around the monastic offices, of an average day for a medieval nun:

She rose at 2 a.m., went down to choir for Matins, followed by Lauds, returned to bed at dawn and slept for three hours. She got up for the day at 6 a.m. and said Prime. Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline followed at intervals through the day; the last at 7 p.m. in winter and 8 p.m. in summer, after which she was supposed to go straight to bed.<sup>16</sup>

It is easy to see how this strict daily routine slotted into an equally-regimented annual pattern, punctuated by the high points of the liturgical year: Christmas, Easter, and so on, and, especially for nuns, the Marian feasts. Yet, it is less easy to be in any way certain about the opportunities presented by this liturgical schema for the delivery of sermons. If it is assumed that it was possible, in theory, for lay people to hear sermons at least on Sundays and important feast days, nothing less can be assumed for nuns of the period; indeed we may even have to postulate that nuns would have heard a sermon on most days of the week. The problem is that, with regard to lay people, many of these assumptions cannot be substantiated by hard evidence.<sup>17</sup> Thus by grounding our thinking about

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<sup>16</sup> See Eileen Power [edited M.M. Postan], *Medieval Women* (Cambridge, 1975) 92–3.

<sup>17</sup> Although there are two cycles of model-type sermons (Mirk's *Festial* and the *Speculum Sacerdotale*) that cover the whole of the liturgical year—temporale and sanctorale—it cannot be extrapolated from this that it is a reflection of actual practice because few of the other extant Middle English cycles are as full as these. So it may be assumed that lay people were preached to on all Sundays and holy days but from the available evidence we can only be certain that Sundays in Lent and on Easter Day almost definitely led to sermons, and that some other Sundays (for example, in Advent and Trinity) would also have done so but that the available evidence does not allow us to be certain about the extent. Moreover, if dependent on providing supporting evidence for preaching on saints' days from extant Middle English manuscripts, then we would be forced into saying that such preaching almost never took place. I do not think that the veritable lack of extant material need necessarily lead to such bleak conclusions because sermons, particularly on well-known saints with a strong and memorable narrative attached, could have been delivered extempore without recourse to a full written version. For a fuller discussion of this whole question see V.M. O'Mara, "Late Middle

everyday preaching to nuns in what we know of lay preaching we are in a somewhat uncertain position. However, it is known that it was usual for convents to have a chaplain or chaplains, resident or otherwise, so it can be presumed that such chaplains were kept busy saying Masses, hearing confessions, helping in an administrative capacity, and delivering sermons. (The circumstances of the individual nunneries must also be taken into account, with the poorer ones being less able to employ or have access to chaplains for these purposes.)<sup>18</sup> An incidental comment in the Franciscan Rule for Minoresses, *The Rewle of Sustris Menouresses enclosid*, in a fifteenth-century manuscript, alludes to such confessors and to such sermons, albeit in a rather vague and oblique way:

The confessors, who shall be assigned by the Minister General or by the Provincial, shall absolve them of all their sins. None of them shall speak by the iron grating at which they shall partake of the Eucharist, and hear divine offices and sermons.

And later:

And the aforesaid grating shall always be closed with two keys, which shall be in the keeping of an honest and suitable person, except when the sisters shall receive God's body and hear sermons.<sup>19</sup>

It is not clear whether these activities always occurred on the same day, or how frequently they took place; while the writer is absolutely precise about the sort of hymns and responses that should be sung and about the posture of the nuns (when they should kneel and so forth), he is totally unforthcoming about preaching.

The Birgittine Rule, the *Regula Salvatoris*, has a more direct reference about preaching to nuns:

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English Sermons on the Apostles: A Survey," *Ephemeridies Liturgicae* 111 (1997) 147–63.

<sup>18</sup> See Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 144–6; Oliva, "The Convent and the Community," 203, points out that the chaplain at Carrow nunnery in Norwich was paid a standard annual wage of £2.13s.4d.

<sup>19</sup> R.W. Chambers, ed., *A Fifteenth-Century Courtesy Book*, and Walter W. Seton, ed., *Two Fifteenth-Century Franciscan Rules*, Early English Text Society, Original Series 148 (1914) 88, ll.18–23, 89, ll.4–7: *The confessoures, þe whoche schullin be assingnid bi þe Minster general or bi þe prouincial, assoyle hem of alle sinnis. None of hem schal speke bi þe grate of yryn bi þe whiche þey schullin be huslid & here diuine office & sermones ... And later: And þe forseide goget alwey schal be closid wip two keyis, in þe warde of a persone couenabel & honeste, sauing whan þe sustris schullin resseyue goddis bodi & here sermonis ...*

Christ here enjoins that the brother priests of the said monastery [of Vadstena] ought ... on certain days, to preach the gospel to the nuns in their mother tongue.

And later:

Indeed, every Sunday they [the brother priests] should expound in the mother tongue the gospel of the day during the Mass to all the listeners. And they should preach publicly on all festivals, whose vigils or eves they fast on bread and water; and [in addition] on other feasts that have a vigil.<sup>20</sup>

Although the full import of this is not entirely clear, it would seem that the Syon nuns heard the exposition of the gospel in the vernacular on certain days and on feast days whose vigils necessitated fasting with bread and water, as well as on feast days celebrated by a vigil. It would thus seem that nuns at Syon had access to a plentiful supply of sermons in the vernacular, though it is doubtful to what extent it is possible to generalize from this case to nuns outside Syon's privileged milieu. It may be, of course, that references to such sermons are not more widespread because they were such a normal occurrence that they merited no comment.

Indeed it is somewhat ironic that more is known about what nuns ate and drank at major feast days than about the sermons they may have heard; for instance, the *Charthe longing to the office of the Celeresse of the Monasterye of Barking* tells of nuns being given half a goose each on the Foundress's day (11 October) and partaking in no less than three gallons of ale and one gallon of red wine on Easter Eve.<sup>21</sup> In theory then, though it can be assumed that nuns heard a sermon in the vernacular at the time of their profession, every Sunday, on all the major feast days, when their convent was visited by the bishop, and perhaps other days besides, in practice there is evidence in the form of actual texts only for

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<sup>20</sup> See Sten Eklund, ed., *Den Heliga Birgitta Opera Minora I: Regula Salvatoris*, Samlingar utgivna av Svenska Fornskriftsällskapet, Second Series, Latinska Skrifter 8: 1 (Lund, 1975) 121, sections 171 and 174 respectively: *Christus precipit hic, quod fratres sacerdotes dicti monasterii debeant ... certis diebus euangelium in materna lingua ipsis monialibus predicare*. And later: *Qui ... quidem omni die dominico euangelium illius diei in ipsa missa omnibus audientibus in materna lingua exponere tenentur cunctisque solempnitatibus, quarum vigiliis seu profesta ieiunant in pane et aqua, atque aliis quibuscumque festis vigiliam habentibus publice predicare*. I am very grateful to Sue Powell for pointing out this reference to me and for discussing its meaning with me.

<sup>21</sup> A summary of this document is included in the Appendix A, in Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 563–8 at 567–8.



three sermons in Latin. The first two were brought to light many years ago by G.R. Owst, while another text in Latin was discovered by Siegfried Wenzel; there also exists an exhortation and two sermons in the vernacular.

In all the material examined by Owst he knew of only two nunnery sermons, both in Latin and extant in fourteenth-century manuscripts: a sermon *In velacione monialis* in London, British Library, Royal 7.A.viii, fols. 307v–310v, on the theme *Vadet ad requiem suam* (Jer. 31:2) and a brief sermon on the lily, *Sermo ad moniales*, on the theme *Florete flores quasi lilium; date odorem* (Eccli. 39:19) found in London, British Library, Harley 52, fol. 128r (the occasion is not clear).<sup>22</sup> The Royal manuscript consists of sermons in Latin for the temporale, various sanctorale feasts, and special occasions, including visitation sermons; a list of contents on fols. 354v–355v shows that in its complete state—it is now missing some folios—it contained 148 sermons. Besides the sermon for nuns, the Harley manuscript comprises mainly ecclesiastical constitutions from the thirteenth century. Because both manuscripts preserve their texts in Latin it may be a clue that all such sermons, particularly “official” sermons, like those for a profession, though preached in English, were preserved in Latin.

An example of such a sermon may be that recently brought to general attention by Siegfried Wenzel.<sup>23</sup> This text, which is found in Cambridge, Jesus College 13, was composed for the profession of Alice Huntingfield, whom Wenzel has not been able to identify, by a Benedictine monk, probably from Durham, apparently at some time in the late fourteenth century.<sup>24</sup> Its theme is *Ingrederet civitatem* (Acts 9:7), which the preacher divides into three parts by considering the three cities spoken of in scripture: the city of

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<sup>22</sup> G.R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c.1350–1450* (Cambridge, 1926) 259 and notes 2–3.

<sup>23</sup> See Siegfried Wenzel, “The Classics in Late-Medieval Preaching,” in *Mediaeval Antiquity*, eds., Andries Welkenhuysen, Herman Braet, and Werner Verbeke, *Mediaevalia Lovaniensia*, Series 1, Studia 24 (Leuven, 1995) 127–43, at 135–40. I am very grateful to Mary Erler for drawing my attention to this article from which all information provided below is derived. For a description of the manuscript, which consists entirely of Latin sermons with a few snippets of Middle English verse, see Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Jesus College, Cambridge* (London, 1895) 11–2.

<sup>24</sup> See Wenzel, “The Classics,” 139 and note 46, for further details about the provenance and date.

man's mind, the city of holy religion, and the city of heavenly joy.<sup>25</sup> The sermon is noteworthy for its extensive use of Ovid. In dealing with the city of man's mind, the preacher allegorizes the house of the sun in *Metamorphoses* 2 so that the house of the mind are the theological virtues, the walls the cardinal virtues, and so on. He then concludes this section by showing how four principles hold up this city: *amor Dei*, *laus Dei*, *ymago Dei*, and *sapiencia*, which in turn are an acronym of Alice's name: "Alys", who herself is said to possess all these qualities. In his second borrowing from Ovid, he uses the story of Scylla, who in *Metamorphoses* 8 was enclosed by her father in a tower and comforted by Apollo playing his lyre; a close identification is made between Alice and Scylla because "Silla" is "Alis" read backwards and, like Scylla, Alice is comforted by the lyre (of God) in her enclosure.

The "original" language of this sermon is not clear—and Wenzel makes no mention of it. However, it may not be without significance that two of the examples of word-play are dependent on the vernacular for their effectiveness. On fol. 81v the preacher makes an analogy between Alice's name "Al Ys", that is "is all", and goodness:

But Alice means complete goodness ... This is clear as follows since by dividing her name into two: "Al Ys", it is evident that she is whatever is, and only that ...

On the same folio he also makes the analogy between Scylla and Alice, as follows:

For Silla with the letters transposed is the name of the following lady in the vernacular, namely, Allys or Alis, Alicia in Latin.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Wenzel notes that the theme is taken from the account of St Paul's conversion "at which feast it was evidently preached". "The Classics," 135. It may be true that the profession of Alice Huntingfield took place on this feast day (25 January) but in my opinion this should not be taken as a foregone conclusion. Having checked the biblical readings provided in the visitation sermons (discussed below) and noted the numerous occasions where the same theme is used for different days, it would seem to me that the themes *may* not (or at least not always) have been taken from the prescribed liturgical readings as laid down by Sarum and the other manuals for the individual days of the year, but that there *may* have been a separate, if unofficial, list of themes that were used for visitations; see further note 54 below.

<sup>26</sup> These two passages are quoted by Wenzel, "The Classics," 137 at note 40, and 138 at note 43: *Sed Abys est tota bonitas ... Patet hoc sic, quia diuidendo nomen sic in duo, Al Ys, patet ipsa esset quidquid est, et solum tale*. And later: *Silla enim litteris transpositis est nomen huius domine in wlgari, uidelicet Allys uel Alis, Alicia latine*.

In addition to these two references, common sense can only lead us to believe that this sermon was preached in the vernacular but of course we cannot be *absolutely* sure on this point. Nevertheless supporting evidence can surely be gleaned from the two profession sermons in the vernacular which will occupy the next section of this paper. The first text (like the Latin one discussed above) was written for particular postulants, and is extant in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Additional A.42, fols. 1r–30r, and the second is a sermon on a nun's profession by John Alcock, bishop of Ely, which was printed twice, in 1497? and c.1497.<sup>27</sup>

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Additional A.42 is a slim pocket-sized vellum manuscript written by one neat and regular hand of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century; it is divided into quires of ten, with one quire (presumably of ten) missing after fol. 10; apart from some flourishing in red of initial capitals and some underlining in red, the appearance is plain. The manuscript contains just one item, which was directed to the nuns at the Benedictine house of Amesbury, specifically two postulants called Mary and Anne at a time unidentified, when Christine was prioress (fol. 27v), in order to help them with their profession. From the opening it is clear that the writer had a close relationship with the women who are about to be professed:<sup>28</sup>

My dear sisters, Mary and Anne, with all the other devout disciples of the school of Christ in your monastery of Amesbury may you have the grace and blessing of our lord everlasting. Amen. Remembering and considering your good and religious desires to have some spiritual comfort and some manner of instruction from me now at the time of your profession, and especially upon the

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<sup>27</sup> See A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English Books printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, second revised and enlarged edition by W.A. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson, and K.F. Pantzer, 3 vols (London, 1976–91) nos. 286–7 [hereafter *STC*]. For the present discussion I have used the edition listed as no. 286: John Alcock, *Desponsacio virginis xpristo. Spousage of virgyn to cryste*. [Henceforth, referred to as Alcock, *Desponsacio virginis xpristo*.]

<sup>28</sup> This text is listed in P.S. Jolliffe, *A Check-List of Middle English Prose Writings of Spiritual Guidance*, *Subsidia Mediaevalia* 2 (Toronto, 1974) 100, H.22, 143, O.35. It is also listed in Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 104, who notes that: *Although the exhortation is addressed to the nuns of Amesbury, we cannot be absolutely certain that this particular manuscript came from the house*. The text is unedited; in the selections quoted here I have expanded the abbreviations in the usual way, and added modern capitalization and punctuation in order to make the text more readable.

words of the same, and primarily so that, as you thought you might, with God's help, be the more disposed and competent for the performance of the same profession, even though I am only a young disciple in that school myself. And therefore it were more appropriate and proper for me to learn to show perfection in my own person than to take it upon me to teach it to others ... considering both your desires to be benevolent ... These two things compel me ... to do what I can for the accomplishment of your wishes. And although I cannot come to perform it in person, to achieve it with my pen which may last longer with you than if I had spoken it with my mouth ...<sup>29</sup>

From the above quotation it is obvious that this Exhortation, strictly speaking, cannot be described as a sermon because it was designed to be read rather than preached, but nevertheless it has all the attributes of a sermon. Following the introductory explanation, the writer says that his theme will be *Habebis thesaurum in celo et veni sequere me* (Matt. 19:21, Mark 10:22, and Luke 18:22). He notes that religious people are: called from honor and possessions; called to a perfect life; and promised a great reward. He then moves on to the main body of the work, his discussion of the three vows, obedience, poverty, and chastity, though only the end of the obedience section is left due to the missing folios after fol. 10. Under chastity, which is perhaps the most interesting of the three sections, he refers to virgins such as St John the Evangelist and the biblical Daniel, as well as comparing chastity to a stone surrounded by gold and to an enclosed garden. He stresses that chastity of mind is needed in addition to chastity of soul, and he then takes the postulants through their profession ceremony, going so far as to tell them that:

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<sup>29</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Additional A.42, fols. 1v-2r: *My deare susterys, Mary and Anne, wyth all the other devozth dysciples of the scole of Cryste in youre monastery of Amysbury be grace and the blessing of oure lorde euyrlastyng. Amen. Remembryng and consydering your good and relygyouse desyres to haue hadde sum gostly comferte and sam [sic] maner off instructyon of me nowe att þe tyme of your professyon, and specyally apou the wordes of the same, and substancyalle wherby as ye thowzth yow myzth, wyth Goddys helpe, be the more apte and abyll to the performans of the same professyon, how be hyt Y am but a young dysciple in that scole myselfe. And therfore hyt were more meet and conuenyant for me to lerne to use perfectyon yn my owne person then to take on me to teche it to other ... consydering youre both desyres to be cherytabyll ... Thes both thynges compellyth me ... to doo what I kan for the accomplyshment of youre desyres. And whereas I can nott cum to doo hyt personally, to doo it wyth my pen wch may better abyde wyth you þen thouze Y had spoken it wyth my mowzthe ...*

in confirmation of all these promises, according to the words of your profession when you have read it, with your own hand, write your name, or, if you cannot, make a cross instead.<sup>30</sup>

The writer throughout keeps alluding to the duties of religious persons but does not go out of his way to stress the female perspective. It is a straightforward work of guidance, written in the form of a sermon, with its theme and subdivisions, that is very easy to follow, and like Alcock's profession sermon to which we shall now turn, makes no great intellectual demands on Mary or Anne or any of the other Amesbury postulants addressed.

The fact that John Alcock's sermon for a nun's profession, commonly known as *Spousage of a Virgin*, was printed twice is in itself, superficially at least, a point worth dwelling upon because only five sermons were printed in medieval England. Yet, four of these were by John Alcock, bishop of Ely, and the last by Richard Fitzjames, bishop of London, and in my opinion the status of the preachers rather than the sermons themselves was the reason for the printing.<sup>31</sup> Indeed the present sermon or rather exhortation is far from being an intricate or theologically-challenging exercise but from the present viewpoint it is important because of its rarity value, and because it mirrors what we know about medieval profession ceremonies for nuns.<sup>32</sup>

Alcock's text opens with the promulgation of the postulant's equivalent of the marriage banns:

I proclaim the banns between the high and most mighty prince, king of all kings ... on the one hand, and A.B. [the postulant's name] on the other hand ...<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Additional A.42, fol. 28r: *yn confrmacion of all thes promysse under the wordes of your professyon when ze haue red hit, wyth your owne hond ze write your name or, yf ze can nott, ynsted therof ze make a crosse.*

<sup>31</sup> Besides the present one these sermons are *Mons perfectionis* printed in 1496, 1497, 1497-98, and 1501 (STC 278-81); "A Sermon for the Boy Bishop," printed in 1499? and 1498? (STC 282-3); "A Sermon on Luke 8:8," printed in 1497?, c.1497, and 1502? (STC 284-85.5); and "Sermo die lune in ebdomada Pasche," printed in 1495? (STC 11024).

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, the two ceremonies, "The Order of Consecration of Nuns" and "The Manner to make a Nun," in *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, ed. William Maskell, 2nd ed., 3 volumes (Oxford, 1882) 3:331-59 and 360-3 respectively.

<sup>33</sup> In quoting from this text I use my own punctuation and capitalization. In the following reference (and in the ones to this book which follow), signings are given in place of folio numbers. Alcock, *Desponsacio virginis xpristo*, A iij recto: *I aske the banes betwix the hyghe and most myghty prynce, kyng of*

The “marriage” ceremony then begins with a short protheme in which Alcock stresses that the marriage must be of the nun’s free will so that she can love, serve and keep the commandments, and do everything that pertains to a good wife; he then proceeds to draw a comparison between the marriage of Christ and the nun, and a high-class secular marriage in which a duke or an earl would marry his equal, whereas in the present case Christ is marrying a wretch. Moreover, he makes the rather class-conscious point that by such a marriage the prospective nun’s kindred will also benefit because thereafter they will be associated with Christ’s kin. In his interpretation of the words he uses as a sort of theme, *Audi filia et vide et inclina aurem tuam et obliuiscere populum tuum et domum patris tui* (Ps. 44:11)<sup>34</sup> he stresses that the nun must leave her own name and become *Nazarena*—this idea of *Nazarena* is later developed more fully; she must be like a green branch by loving Christ and keeping her five wits for him. Christ himself is described as the *Flos campi*;<sup>35</sup> he is the prime example and leader of virgins, of which various examples are then given ranging from the well-known ones like John the Baptist to the equally familiar virgin martyrs such as Agnes, Cecilia, and Catherine. Finally in this section the four characteristics of virginity are outlined: it replenishes paradise, it only pleases God if accompanied by faith, it is the beginning of other virtues, and among women only virgins are consecrated.

There then follow four sections headed respectively *Custos*, *Lumen*, *Nazarena*, and *Vncta*. When he turns to these, the preacher becomes less theoretical and more pragmatic. *Custos* relates to the aspects of profession that a nun must hold to: the veil, mantle, ring, and the lighted taper, with Agnes being used as an example of one who was mindful of the veil and the mantle. *Lumen* signifies the fourth aspect of profession, the light that is Christ, which must burn in the soul by a demonstration of obedience and an unquestioning nature. He then returns to a discussion of *Nazarena*: the nun must be delivered from the world by thinking of the cross in penance, fasting, prayer, mortification of the flesh, and keeping enclosure;<sup>36</sup>

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all kynges ... of the one partye, and .A.B., of the thother partye ...

<sup>34</sup> Alcock, *Desponsacio virginis xpristo*, A ij verso.

<sup>35</sup> Alcock, *Desponsacio virginis xpristo*, A iij verso.

<sup>36</sup> The problem of nuns and others who broke with enclosure to the extent of abandoning the religious life is discussed in F. Donald Logan, *Runaway Religious in Medieval England c.1240–1540*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life

here the anti-role-model is Dina, the daughter of Jacob, who went about and so was "*rauysshed*".<sup>37</sup> Finally under the heading *Vncta*, the last part of the sermon, he points out how the name of the nun will be added to Christ's virgins and spouses; she must seek Christ, as Mary Magdalene did. The nun is then taken on a sort of metaphorical tour to seek her spouse within her own church; she is to go to an altar within the church or to an image of the Annunciation, then to an altar or image of the Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Judgment in turn. If the virgin fulfills all that is required of her, she will be crowned with a special crown reserved for special lovers of Christ: martyrs, virgins, and—interestingly—preachers.

Alcock's profession sermon is, as we have seen, very much in the tradition of the numerous tracts on virginity produced for women in the middle ages; it is reminiscent, for instance, of the fifteenth-century vernacular treatise on maidenhood extant in two rather dissimilar versions in London, British Library, Arundel 286, fols. 134v-148r, and London, Westminster School 3, fols. 137r-153r,<sup>38</sup> and, moreover, echoes of English texts such as *Ancrene Wisse* and the "Katherine-Group" of saints' lives also reverberate throughout it.<sup>39</sup> He says nothing new or unexpected; his aim is simply to tease out for these postulants the significance of the "marriage" ceremony, and, though he does not stoop to the base literalism of the *Hali Meidhad* author, he nevertheless makes sure that the nun knows what a good alliance she has made.<sup>40</sup> The focus here is

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and Thought, Fourth Series (Cambridge, 1996).

<sup>37</sup> Alcock, *Desponsacio virginis xpisto*, B i recto. See the biblical account in Genesis 34 which presents a rather more complicated story in which Sichev ravishes the innocent Dina but later, partly on account of his love for her, suffers death at the hands of the vengeful and deceitful sons of Jacob.

<sup>38</sup> A basic transcription of these texts is available in Lorna R.L. Stevenson, "Fifteenth-Century Chastity and Virginity: Texts, Contexts, Audiences," 2 volumes (Ph.D. diss., University of Liverpool, 1995) 1:325-66 and 367-97; they are also edited and discussed in detail in Laurie N. Ringer, "The Problem with Versions: An Edition of 'Of Maydenhede' and a Close Examination of the Relationship between the Two Known Versions of a Fifteenth-Century Virginity Text, 'Of Maydenhede' of British Library MS Arundel 286 and 'A Noble Tretys of Maydenhode' of Westminster School MS 3" (M.A. thesis, University of Hull, 1996).

<sup>39</sup> I am thinking particularly of the spousal imagery which permeates the lives of Catherine, Margaret and Juliana, *Hali Meidhad*, and part 7 of *Ancrene Wisse*.

<sup>40</sup> See especially the discussion of the woes of pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing as compared with the idealized relationship of the maiden

exclusively on Christ and on the nun's relationship with him; unlike the virginity texts for secular women, where the lot of the married women is also described, there is a restriction of focus here, an apparent narrowness that we shall also see in the next example, where something as insignificant as the nun's habit comes to symbolize her whole world.

Moving then from the highest point of a nun's religious life, her profession, to the highest point of the Marian year, my third text is an anonymous nunnery sermon for the Feast of the Assumption, found in Cambridge, University Library, Hh.1.11, fols. 128r–132v.<sup>41</sup> As I have dealt with the Assumption sermon in great detail elsewhere, I do not intend to discuss it at length here, though because it is the only extant example of a vernacular nunnery sermon in manuscript form for an occasion other than profession it nevertheless deserves serious attention. It occurs in a fifteenth-century East Anglian manuscript that has been written by some eight major and nine minor hands, and shows evidence of booklet-production, though it is probably a composite manuscript that contains some booklets.<sup>42</sup> The contents of the manuscript are the sort that would make good reading material for a nun, or a devout lay woman: extracts from Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, extracts from *The Prickyng of Love*, *The Revelations of St Elizabeth of Hungary*, and so on.<sup>43</sup> The compiler is anonymous, though on linguistic grounds and on internal evidence, it is likely that it was written for nuns in a convent in Norfolk, possibly the Benedictine foundation at Carrow.<sup>44</sup>

The sermon itself is striking not for its literary skill or its interesting content but for the cunning way in which it is an amalgam of Birgittine sources. Basically it is a patchwork from the *Sermo Angelicus* or Birgittine Breviary and selected extracts from the

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and Christ in Bela Millett, ed., *Hali Meðhad*, Early English Text Society, Original Series 284 (1982) 16 (l.25) – 19 (l.25).

<sup>41</sup> The text used for the present discussion is that in V.M. O'Mara, ed., *A Study and Edition of Selected Middle English Sermons: Richard Alkerton's Easter Week Sermon preached at St Mary Spital in 1406, a Sermon on Sunday Observance, and a Nunnery Sermon for the Feast of the Assumption*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, New Series 13 (1994) 197–203.

<sup>42</sup> For full details see O'Mara, *A Study*, 152–62.

<sup>43</sup> On the purpose of the collection see O'Mara, *A Study*, 162–4; for a description of the contents, 147–52.

<sup>44</sup> The reasoning for this is fully discussed in O'Mara, *A Study*, 164–72.



*Revelaciones* of St Birgitta of Sweden, with "original" or at least untraced short passages linking the borrowed sections, as follows:

|            |                                                     |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| ll.1–5     |                                                     |
| ll.6–65    | <i>Sermo Angelicus</i> /Birgittine Breviary, Ch. 20 |
| ll.66–71   |                                                     |
| ll.72–99   | <i>Revelaciones</i> I: 31                           |
| ll.100–114 |                                                     |
| ll.114–47  | <i>Revelaciones</i> I: 7                            |
| ll.148–60  |                                                     |
| ll.160–65  | <i>Revelaciones</i> I: 20                           |
| ll.166–68  |                                                     |
| ll.168–83  | <i>Revelaciones</i> II: 16                          |
| ll.183–90  |                                                     |

In terms of choice, the Second Lesson for Saturday (Ch. 20) from the Breviary was a natural one as Saturday was the day devoted to the Assumption in the Birgittine Office; likewise there are suggestions elsewhere that *Revelaciones* I: 31 was linked to the Assumption, but why the compiler chose the other passages is not clear.<sup>45</sup> The exact source of his borrowings is not known (the Birgittine *Revelaciones* in particular are a minefield of textual complexity) but I have demonstrated elsewhere that they are not related to any known English versions of the same material, and that the sermon as it stands was not intended for Birgittine sisters.<sup>46</sup>

Following an introductory section, ll.1–5, which contains the usual humility topos, the sermon may be broken down into the following sections:

ll.6–65 concentrate on the way the Virgin Mary was honored and glorified at the time of her Assumption;

ll.66–109 list her seven excellent "*dygnites*": virtuousness, purity, fairness, wisdom, strength, clearness, fullness of spiritual "*sweetness*" and grace;

ll.110–85 have an allegorization of the individual parts of the nun's habit,<sup>47</sup> which respectively symbolize contrition and confession

<sup>45</sup> For full details about the Birgittine sources see O'Mara, *A Study*, 175–9.

<sup>46</sup> See O'Mara, *A Study*, 179–85. The reason why one can be so definite that the present sermon was not intended for Birgittine nuns is that in the allegorization of the habit the distinctive Birgittine crown is omitted.

<sup>47</sup> In order to make this allegory appropriate for nuns, the preacher has

(smock), trust in God (kirtle), two good desires (boots), refraining of the will (girdle), consideration of perpetual joy (knives), awareness of God (surplice), faith (mantle), consideration of the Passion (cord of the mantle), abstinence (wimple), obedience (veil), and three things in terms of spiritual and pragmatic behavior that God bids, counsels, forbids, and suffers (ring);

ll. 186–90 provide a short conclusion.

There is then nothing abstruse in the message purveyed to the nuns by this preacher, and the only unusual feature is that he goes to the trouble of ransacking Birgittine sources instead of telling the well-known story of the Assumption used by John Mirk and other English preachers.<sup>48</sup>

In the first part of the sermon (up to l. 109) our preacher explains how Mary was honored at the time of her Assumption by the hierarchy of heaven, and in the second half (from l. 110 onwards) how the nuns should conduct themselves in order to honor Mary at the present feast of the Assumption. He makes the link between the two parts, the “historic” and the liturgical time-frame, the past and the present, by the simple expedient of stressing how religious persons should dress in “honest” clothes full of “*alle vertuous examplis*” for the present feast of the Assumption. If they do this they will honor the Virgin Mary and will be brought “*after þis freele lyf ... to diuine vysion in quyche seyntys haue here fruicion*”, as he states in the closing lines, thus melding past, present, and future.<sup>49</sup>

According to this sermon the means of getting to heaven for a nun are quite straightforward and are around her all the time as a *memento vivere* rather than a *memento mori*; the means are concrete symbols which she cannot avoid or ignore but are part of her very being as a nun: her religious habit has almost literally been brought to life for her. For such a nun it would be hard in future to simply perceive the veil as a piece of cloth or to forget about the significance of the ring; each had been imbued with a heavy symbolism that would recall for her the profession ceremony and perhaps also the sort of sermon she had heard at that ceremony, or

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added the girdle, knives, surplice and the allegorization of the wimple, veil and ring; he also alters the meaning of some of the items, so that “*monile*” in the Latin is translated here as “cord of the mantle”, rather than “necklace”; for full details of this see the notes to ll. 114–5 in O’Mara, *A Study*, 216–7.

<sup>48</sup> For details of the usual Assumption narrative see O’Mara, *A Study*, 173–5.

<sup>49</sup> See O’Mara, *A Study*, 201, ll. 113–14, 203, ll. 189–90.

the sort she might hear when her convent was visited by the bishop, a category of sermon to which we shall now turn.

Although, as far as I know, there are no texts, at least in the vernacular, of visitation sermons, this is nevertheless a fruitful area for investigation. The present study will concentrate on those sermons found in the Lincoln visitation records of Archbishop Alnwick between 1437 and 1447. The reason for this choice is purely a pragmatic one; the Lincoln records have been fully edited whereas a study of other visitation records would necessitate a thorough investigation of unedited records that might or might not yield relevant findings.

In the two volumes of Thompson's edition a total of seventy-nine sermons are described, almost all in great detail with the place of visitation, the order, the visitor and date all given.<sup>50</sup> Of these visits twenty-two were to nuns. In general, the visits described conform—albeit with the exclusion or abbreviation of some aspects—with the usual pattern of visitations.<sup>51</sup> From the point of view of sermon studies what is of course important is the detail given about the sermon, which was preached before the business of the visitation began. In these examples the preaching of a sermon is mentioned in forty-five of the visits to male houses and on seventeen occasions in the visits to female houses. In almost all cases the preacher's name is given, the theme of the sermon cited and the language, Latin or English, specified. When the individual occurrences are scrutinized and the results analyzed some very interesting points emerge, as will be seen from the following discussion and from the APPENDIX. What makes the results even more interesting is that one can compare the sermons to male houses with those to female houses.

On a general level the first point is that at the time of the visitations the sermons were almost consistently given by three of Alnwick's own staff, Thomas Duffeld, John Beverley and Thomas Twyer—all theologically eminent university men—<sup>52</sup> though

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<sup>50</sup> See A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln, 11–111: Records of Visitations held by William Alnwick, Bishop of Lincoln*, The Canterbury and York Society 24 and 33 (1919 and 1927).

<sup>51</sup> For a description of these see A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1: Injunctions and other Documents from the Registers of Richard Flemyng and William Gray, Bishops of Lincoln*, The Canterbury and York Society 17 (1915) ix–xii.

<sup>52</sup> For their biographies see A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the*

only two of these preachers were operating at the same time. Thomas Duffeld's first sermon noted here was preached on 26 January 1438 and the last on 21 January 1441; he overlapped with John Beverley from 16 June 1440, when Beverley gave his first sermon listed here. By 19 January 1442 Thomas Twyer had come on the scene when he preached his first sermon recorded here; he overlapped with John Beverley until 3 June 1445 when Beverley gave his last sermon noted here.

When the individual visits are further broken down, one obvious point is confirmed and others raised. As one might expect, given what is known of nuns' literacy and educational levels, and the theoretical knowledge we have about preaching to nuns, the language when specified is English, whereas, with two exceptions, all the sermons to a male audience are in Latin (where the language is noted). It is not apparent why the first example, Beverley's sermon at the monastery of St James at Northampton on 7 July 1442 took place in English; however, the second example is clearly not the exception that proves the rule, because the visit in question to Bicester priory on 28 May 1445 was conducted in the parish church and Beverley's sermon was thus attended by ordinary lay people for whom a sermon in Latin may have been incomprehensible. It would therefore seem fairly safe to conclude that all such visitation preaching to male religious took place in Latin, whereas such preaching to female religious took place in English (including those cases where the language remains unspecified). Another difference, though one that is not so obvious,

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*University of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge, 1963) 60 for Beverley, 196 for Duffeld; and A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, 3 volumes (Oxford, 1959) 2:1920 for Twyer. Like many other canons of his time, Beverley, who was buried in the nave of Lincoln Cathedral, was conscious of his status and left instructions in his will that in his post-mortem image he was to be shown dressed in his choir robes, and that sixty-five priests were to say twenty masses each for his soul; see David Levine, *A Brotherhood of Canons serving God: English Secular Cathedrals in the Later Middle Ages*, *Studies in the History of Medieval Religion* 8 (Woodbridge, 1995) 135, 147; for information about his books see p.141. With the exception of John Sperhawke, who was a secular clerk, the other named preachers in the Lincoln visitations belonged to the places visited: Thomas Depyng, Gilbert Multone and William Burghe were monks and John Alesby, William Yarum and John Pomery were canons at their respective monasteries; John Beke was rector of Lincoln College Oxford, and John Maunselle was a fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. From this it is obvious that, though it was more usual for a member of the bishop's household to preach the visitation sermon, it could be given by someone *in situ*.

is that there is a slightly higher emphasis on themes from the New Testament than from the Old Testament in "female" sermons.<sup>53</sup>

With regard to the actual preachers it would seem that there is no difference in the status of the preacher; it would appear to depend upon who was "on duty". Thus on 3 July 1440 Thomas Duffeld preached to the nuns of Legbourne Priory and on 6 July 1440 to the monks of Humberstone Abbey. Similarly Duffeld preached to the brothers of Breedon Priory on 19 January 1441, Beverley to the nuns of Langley on 20 January 1441, and Duffeld to the nuns of Gracedieu on 21 January 1441. This last example also brings to light another interesting point: Beverley preached at Langley on Rom. 12:1 while Duffeld used the same theme the next day at Gracedieu. It may simply have been the same theme or it *may* in effect have been the same sermon because this is a phenomenon that occurs throughout these visitations, in most cases with the same preacher using the same theme in different locations. For example, Duffeld uses 1 Cor. 14:40 for the Dominicans at Ulverscroft Priory on 29 July 1438 and for the Benedictines at Markby Priory on 19 August of the same year (it was also used by an anonymous preacher, who may have been Duffeld, at Thornholm priory on 12 April 1440), while Beverley was keen on Songs 3:11 for female audiences as he used it for the nuns at Catesby on 17 July 1442 and the nuns at Goring some years later on 21 May 1445.<sup>54</sup> In such cases it would seem easier to make a case for

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<sup>53</sup> The figures are twenty-six uses of the Old Testament and twenty-two of the New Testament for "male" sermons, and nine of the Old Testament and eight of the New Testament for "female" sermons.

<sup>54</sup> The other examples noted are the use of Ps. 79:15 by Duffeld on 26 January 1438, 21 August 1438, and 22 November 1440; Ps. 105:4 by Duffeld on 23 September 1438, and by Beverley on 12 July 1442; 1 Pet. 4:7 by Beverley on 16 June 1440, 24 January 1443, and 3 June 1445; Esther 2:2 by Duffeld on 23 July 1440 and 21 October 1440; Isa. 52:11 by Beverley on 26 June 1442 and 11 July 1442; 2 Cor. 13:11 by Beverley on 7 July 1442, 13 July 1442, and 22 May 1445; and Songs 7:12 by John Sperhawke on 29 January 1443 and by Twyer on 5 June 1445, and 10 September 1446. Given this recycling it would seem to have been the case that there was at least a list of themes (if not actual sermons) deemed particularly suitable for use at visitations; with this knowledge in mind it may be easier to identify untitled visitation sermons in the future. On the completion of my work on the preachers and their themes, I discovered that Thompson, *Visitations of Religious Houses*, Appendix III, 3:417-9, had also noted that the same preachers occur and that the same themes are used in the visitations; however, he does not discuss this matter in detail and neither does he make any comment on male/female differences. See also

recycling than perhaps in other cases. Although it may have been that Duffeld had used Beverley's sermon or a "common" sermon on Romans 12:1 on the following day, it is less certain whether he would have had the effrontery to copy Gilbert Multone's sermon on Jeremiah 6:6 given by Multone on 18 June 1440 and used as the same theme by Duffeld on 3 July 1440. Once again this opens up other possibilities: if Duffeld had copied Multone, one could postulate that he had copied out the sermon in the interim—in which case one could further postulate that all such sermons were written down rather than being extempore events (although there is nothing absolutely to rule out the possibility that Duffeld was only borrowing ideas rather than Multone's actual sermon). It would also have to be postulated that the Beverley/Duffeld sermon of 20/21 January 1441 had also been written down. Furthermore we might also have to suppose that the sermon Multone gave to men on 18 June 1440 was replicated by Duffeld for women on 3 July 1440; this would mean that, albeit with a difference in language, there was no difference in content in male/female preaching. Such a hypothesis is, of course, rather risky and in the absence of written evidence not one that can be substantiated; indeed it is not one I would want to argue for given what we know of the low level of nuns' education and the sort of naive—albeit intriguing—examples that have been already examined here; moreover, it is the only example found here of the same theme being used for a male and a female audience.

Indeed the absence of written evidence is one of the major problems; it is not known but may be supposed that these sermons were written down in common with those for the male religious, but whether they were committed to paper or parchment in Latin or English is not known; such sermons are not extant today in English and we can only assume less certainly that the Latin texts do not exist either. Nevertheless even without the texts we can piece some information together. The themes of these sermons are listed below and it is thus possible to extrapolate something from them without in any way being able to reconstruct the sermons in question. One of the most obvious points about the texts chosen for preaching to nuns (and I am assuming that the preachers would have referred to the text as a whole rather than just the theme) is

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note 25 above.

that they invariably present the more memorable and straightforward biblical stories—even for a modern audience—the story of the fig tree, Luke 13, Lot's wife as a pillar of salt, Gen. 19, the Annunciation, Luke 1, and so on. In contrast, the themes chosen for preaching to the male congregations lack this predominantly narrative bias.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the texts are almost all intensely focused with a strong narrative content, for example, the story of how a wife, Rebecca, was sought for Isaac, Genesis 24, or how Esther was chosen as a wife, Esther 2. Even when they have used the Old Testament, the preachers have avoided those sections with a vague, confused or multiple plot line. Besides the stories of Esther, Rebecca, and Lot, the others are taken from the Song of Songs whose spousal imagery is obviously very appropriate in preaching to nuns, and even the text from Jer. 6 focuses simply on the female Jerusalem as a sinful city. The last reading highlights another aspect of these themes: there is clearly a pronounced emphasis on women, particularly virginal women, with biblical women being seen as role-models (Rebecca, Esther, the virgin of the Song of Songs, and the Virgin Mary), anti-role-models (Lot's wife, and the sinful Jerusalem), and poor role-models turned to good (Mary Magdalene with the ointment).

There is too a concentration on the physical and the corporeal in the texts chosen: in the New Testament readings heaven is compared variously to a mustard seed, Luke 13, treasure hidden in the field, Matt. 13, and so on. At every point the images are concrete and clear: the Church is a building, Eph. 2, and a body, Rom. 12; Christ is the "flower of the field" and the "lily of the valleys" (Song 2), and, with the exception of Matt. 24, which foretells the destruction of the temple and speaks of doomsday, the tone is fairly positive. From this it would seem that the preachers of these sermons presented a fairly straightforward message to the nuns in the form of narratives that were easy to follow and to empathize with: in the same way as the virginal Rebecca had been sought as a bride for Isaac so each of these nuns had been sought for Christ, but like Rebecca it was their duty to show unquestioning obedience to this call to literally and figuratively leave their fathers' house,

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<sup>55</sup> There are a few exceptions, for example, the use of 1 Samuel 20, which concerns Jonathan and David, on 14 October 1440, and John 2, which tells the story of the marriage at Cana, on 18 January 1443, but in the main this generalization holds true.

and be a good wife to Isaac/Christ. Moreover, because these were Visitation and not profession sermons presumably greater emphasis was placed on the need for continued right conduct through a rigorous adherence to the requirements of the religious life and steady mortification of the flesh, so that in the words used by both Beverley and Duffeld to the nuns of Langley and Gracedieu in January 1441 they could:

Present your members a living sacrifice, a holy sacrifice, a sacrifice acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1).

Having analyzed vernacular preaching to late medieval nuns, it is possible to draw a few conclusions. Despite the disadvantage of having few texts we can extrapolate something of its nature from the ones that we do have and from the surviving references. Preaching to nuns definitely took place in the vernacular, though nearly all such texts are no longer extant—unless they have been preserved in Latin. The status of the preacher was varied and would appear to have been due to the force of circumstances rather than choice: profession ceremonies were officiated over by bishops so profession sermons were preached by bishops,<sup>56</sup> ordinary sermons were presumably preached by whatever chaplain happened to be at hand, and so on. Such preachers were not beyond recycling their own work and that of others, as witnessed by the brazen borrowing of the preacher of the Assumption sermon, and therefore the quality of the sermons may not always have been of the highest order. In terms of content the preachers appear to have abided by the tried and tested. Preaching to nuns would appear to have demonstrated a fixation with the literal and the allegorical significance thereof: the straightforward exposition in the Exhortation, the nun's habit in the Assumption sermon, the "tools" of profession in John Alcock's *Spousage*, the hints in the visitation sermons, and indeed the use of Ovid in the Alice Huntingfield Latin sermon. This blends in with other research done on devotional prose aimed at women: Elizabeth Robertson, for instance, in her work on texts such as *Hali Meidhad*, *Ancrene Wisse*, and the "Katherine-Group" has demonstrated that the female's relationship with the spouse Christ was never allowed to enter into mystical

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<sup>56</sup> Although presumably other clerics might also be involved given the information provided above about the authorship of Alice Huntingfield's profession sermon and the Exhortation.



spheres but was always grounded in the earthly and the concrete.<sup>57</sup> Here too, as in the devotional prose, there is a concentration in sermons addressed to nuns, as we have seen, on the central idea of the spousal relationship between Christ and the virgin, with the same familiar role models, the biblical virgins, the virgin saints, and the Virgin Mary, being presented. Above all the nun is never allowed to forget how she should conduct herself, particularly if she wants to become the "ideal" wife of her spouse, Jesus Christ.

At the beginning of this paper it was noted that there was not much that could be gleaned about preaching to nuns from the few sermon manuscripts known to have been associated with nunneries, but the amount of devotional/mystical prose linked to nunneries was stressed. In many respects this sort of prose may provide a clearer indication of what preaching to nuns was like than we might have previously supposed; thus we have seen how the Exhortation fits into the teacher/female pupil mold so common in medieval English devotional writings for women, how the preacher of the Assumption sermon borrowed most of his material from Birgitta of Sweden's work, how Alcock saw the idea of the *sponsa Christi* as being central to his exhortation, and how the visitation sermons would seem to have been concerned with the personal relationship between the bride and the spouse, as seen in Old Testament and allegorical models.

In conclusion, though the present study has not unfortunately brought brand new texts to light or suggested huge untapped areas for future research (apart from visitation records), it has, I hope, given some indication of what is meant in terms of problems and possibilities in this hitherto overlooked area of vernacular preaching to nuns in late medieval England.

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<sup>57</sup> See Elizabeth Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville, 1990).

## APPENDIX

*Visitation Sermons in the Diocese of Lincoln 1437-47*

Source: A. Hamilton Thompson, ed. *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln, 2-3: Records of Visitations held by William Alnwick*, The Canterbury and York Society 24 and 33 (1919 and 1927).

In the following table, the date of the visitation (the sermon took place on the first day of the visitation), the foundation where the sermon was delivered, the preacher's name (where known), whether it was a male (M) or a female (F) house, and the language (L= Latin, E = English, U = Unknown) of the sermon are provided; for full details, especially of the houses visited, see Thompson above.

| <i>Date</i>   | <i>Place</i> | <i>M/F</i> | <i>Preacher</i> | <i>Theme</i> | <i>La.</i> |
|---------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| 10&11/12/1437 | Peterborough | M          | Depyng          | Eph.5:8      | U          |
| 26/1/1438     | Bardney      | M          | Duffeld         | Ps.79:15     | L          |
| 29/7/1438     | Ulvscroft    | M          | Duffeld         | 1 Co.14:40   | U          |
| 19/8/1438     | Markby       | M          | Duffeld         | 1 Co.14:4    | L          |
| 21/8/1438     | Spalding     | M          | Duffeld         | Ps.79:15     | L          |
| 23/9/1438     | Fotheringay  | M          | Duffeld         | Ps.105:4     | L          |
| 1439          | Ramsay       | M          | No sermon       |              |            |
| 28/9/1439     | St Neot's    | M          | Duffeld         | ?            | L          |
| 15/10/1439    | Huntingdon   | M          | Duffeld         | 1 Sm.17:18   | L          |
| 17/3/1440     | Bardney      | M          | No sermon       |              |            |
| 6/4/1440      | Torksey      | M          | No sermon       |              |            |
| 6/4/1440      | Fosse        | F          | Anonymous       | Lk.13:7      | U          |
| 7/4/1440      | Heynings     | F          | Anonymous       | Eph.2:21     | U          |
| 11/4/1440     | Gokewell     | F          | Anonymous       | Gn.19:17     | U          |
| 12/4/1440     | Thornholm    | M          | Anonymous       | 1 Co.14:40   | L          |
| 16/6/1440     | Bourne       | M          | Beverley        | 1 Pt.4:7     | U          |
| 18&19/6/1440  | Croyland     | M          | Multone         | Jer.6:6      | U          |
| 3/7/1440      | Legbourne    | F          | Duffeld         | Jer.6:6      | U          |
| 6/7/1440      | Humberstone  | M          | Duffeld         | 1 Sm.17:11   | U          |
| 7/7/1440      | Wellow       | M          | Alesby          | Jer.4:10?    | U          |
| 9&10/7/1440   | Nuncoton     | F          | Beverley        | Gn.24:63     | U          |
| 11/7/1440     | Thornton     | M          | Duffeld         | Sg 6:10      | U          |
| 14/7/1440     | Elsham       | M          | Duffeld         | Is.5:17      | U          |
| 23/7/1440     | Stixwold     | F          | Duffeld         | Est.2:2      | E          |
| 25/7/1440     | Stainfield   | F          | Beverley        | Ps.54:8      | U          |

|            |                |   |           |            |   |
|------------|----------------|---|-----------|------------|---|
| 6/10/1440  | Bardney        | M | No sermon |            |   |
| 12/10/1440 | Nocton Park    | M | Duffeld   | Mk.16:2    | U |
| 14/10/1440 | Kyme           | M | Duffeld   | 1 Sm.20:29 | U |
| 21/10/1440 | Stamford/L.    | M | No sermon |            |   |
| 21/10/1440 | Stamford/M.    | F | Duffeld   | Est.2:2    | U |
| 21/10/1440 | Newstead       | M | No sermon |            |   |
| 21/11/1440 | Laund          | M | Yarum     | Jer.7:3    | L |
| 22/11/1440 | Owston         | M | Duffeld   | Ps.79:15   | U |
| 26/11/1440 | Kirkby Bellars | M | Duffeld   | Gn.37:14   | L |
| 1/12/1440  | Leicester      | M | Beverley  | No text    | U |
| 3/12/1440  | Leicester      | M | Pomery    | Mt.21:5    | U |
| 19/1/1441  | Breedon        | M | Duffeld   | Gn.37:14   | L |
| 20/1/1441  | Langley        | F | Beverley  | Rom.12:1   | E |
| 21/1/1441  | Gracedieu      | F | Duffeld   | Rom.12:1   | E |
| 27/3/1441  | Dorchester     | M | No sermon |            |   |
| 10/10/1441 | Ankerwyke      | F | No sermon |            |   |
| 7/5/1442   | Markyate       | F | No sermon |            |   |
| 19/6/1442  | Stamford/M.    | F | No sermon |            |   |
| 24/6/1442  | Peterborough   | M | Burghes   | Lk.11:35   | L |
| 26/6/1442  | Fotheringay    | M | Beverley  | Is.52:11   | L |
| 29/6/1442  | Irthlingboro'  | M | Beverley  | Mt.6:33    | L |
| 1/7/1442   | Higham         | M | Beverley  | Jb 23:11   | L |
| 7/7/1442   | Northamp.      | M | Beverley  | 2 Co.13:11 | E |
| 11/7/1442  | Northamp.      | M | No sermon |            |   |
| 11/7/1442  | Brackley       | M | Beverley  | Is.52:11   | L |
| 12/7/1442  | Chacombe       | M | Beverley  | Ps.105:4   | L |
| 13/7/1442  | Canons Ash.    | M | Beverley  | 2 Co.13:11 | L |
| 15/7/1442  | Daventry       | M | Twyer     | Lk.19:13   | L |
| 17/7/1442  | Catesby        | F | Beverley  | Sg 3:11    | E |
| 22/7/1442  | Rothwell       | F | Twyer     | Lk.1:30    | U |
| 20/11/1442 | Stonely        | M | No sermon |            |   |
| 30/11/1442 | Wymondley      | M | Beverley  | Phil.3:20  | L |
| 16/1/1443  | Harrold        | F | Twyer     | Mt.24:42?  | E |
| 18/1/1443  | Newnham        | M | Twyer     | Jn.2:1     | L |
| 21/1/1443  | Elstow         | F | Twyer     | Mt.13:44   | E |
| 24/1/1443  | Dunstable      | M | Beverley  | 1 Pt.4:7   | L |
| 29/1/1443  | Northill       | M | Sperhawke | Sg 7:12    | L |
| 8/5/1444   | Bardney        | M | No sermon |            |   |
| 21/5/1445  | Goring         | F | Beverley  | Sg 3:11    | E |
| 22/5/1445  | Dorchester     | M | Beverley  | 2 Co.3:11  | L |
| 26/5/1445  | Studley        | F | Beverley  | Sg 2:10    | E |
| 28/5/1445  | Bicester       | M | Beverley  | Lk.24:49   | E |
| 29/5/1445  | Godstow        | F | Twyer     | Mt.26:26   | E |

|           |              |   |           |            |   |
|-----------|--------------|---|-----------|------------|---|
| 1/6/1445  | Littlemore   | F | No sermon |            |   |
| 1/6/1445  | Oxf. Linc.   | M | Beke      | Ps.105:4   | L |
| 2/6/1445  | Oxf. Oriel   | M | Maunselle | 1 Tm.6:20  | L |
| 3/6/1445  | Oxford       | M | Beverley  | 1 Pt.4:7   | L |
| 4/6/1445  | Oseney       | M | Twyer     | Mt.25:6,10 | L |
| 5/6/1445  | Eynsham      | M | Twyer     | Sg 7:12    | L |
| 16/6/1445 | Wroxton      | M | Twyer     | Mt.25:14   | L |
| 6/8/1445  | Stamford/M.  | F | No sermon |            |   |
| 10/9/1446 | Peterborough | M | Twyer     | Sg 7:12    | L |
| 15/8/1447 | Nutley       | M | No sermon |            |   |
| Undated   | Garendon     | M | No sermon |            |   |

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**PART FOUR**

**PREACHING BY ITALIAN NUNS AND HERMITS**



## AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION IN THE *VITAE* AND SERMONS OF HUMILITY OF FAENZA

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A much overlooked figure among medieval holy women is the Vallombrosan nun Humility of Faenza (†1310). She merits attention not only for her influential life as abbess and foundress of two monasteries, but also for the more exceptional fact that she is one of the few medieval women known to have composed sermons. More remarkable yet is the fact that all of her sermons, which run to some 180 pages, have survived virtually intact just as they were recorded during her lifetime.<sup>1</sup> This ranks Humility alongside the celebrated Hildegard of Bingen (†1179) for whom a collection of informal homilies and sermons have survived,<sup>2</sup> but apart from other women, such as Rose of Viterbo (†1251) and Catherine of Siena (†1380), said to have given sermons or publicly exhorted their contemporaries in a style akin to preaching.<sup>3</sup> Yet despite Humility's distinction in this regard, her sermons and the

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<sup>1</sup> Adele Simonetti, ed., *I sermoni di Umiltà da Faenza: Studio e edizione* (Spoleto, 1995) (hereafter cited as *I sermoni*). Simonetti divides the sermons into fifteen separate discourses, while recognizing that this may not reflect their original division. On this point, see her introduction, xxxi–xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> For a collection of Hildegard's gospel homilies, see *Expositiones evangeliorum* in *Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis*, vol. 8 of *Analecta sacra*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Pitra (1882; reprint, Farnborough, Hants., 1966). Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Carolyn Muessig are preparing a critical edition based on the manuscripts Wiesbaden "Reisenkodex", Hess. Landesbibl. 2, fols. 434ra–461vb, 12th, and London, British Library. Add. 15102, fols. 146r–191r, 15th. Other sermons, transmitted in the form of letters, may be consulted in *Hildegardis Bingensis epistolarium*, L. Van Acker, ed., CCCM 91–91A (Turnhout, 1991, 1993). I am grateful to Beverly Mayne Kienzle for these references.

<sup>3</sup> On the complex question of Rose of Viterbo's preaching, see Darleen Pryds, "Proclaiming Sanctity: Rose of Viterbo," in *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*, eds. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkeley, 1998) 159–72. On the exhortatory speaking of Catherine of Siena, see Karen Scott, "St Catherine of Siena, 'Apostola,'" *Church History* 61 (1992) 34–46.



puzzling circumstances of their composition and delivery have been little studied by scholars.<sup>4</sup>

A question fundamental to understanding Humility's sermons regards the sources of her authority. As spiritual adviser, miracle-worker, ascetic solitary, and foundress of two monasteries, Humility proved to be a charismatic leader among both men and women. Her creative initiative in these roles illuminates her equally impressive achievement as a religious author. Although she punctuates her sermons with declarations of inadequacy, a standard feature of medieval religious writing, especially by women, she decisively assumes the position of teacher and preacher. I will explore the sources of her authority as a religious leader and author by examining evidence first within two interrelated *vitae* about her, one in Latin, the other in Italian, both composed shortly after her death in 1310. I will then turn to the sermons themselves for evidence of Humility's own attitudes regarding the sources of her authority. Along the way, I will touch upon although by no means fully address a number of related questions regarding her sermons, specifically, their language, genre, content, audience, and form of delivery. Despite significant differences demarcating her own viewpoint from those of her hagiographers, Humility emerges from both the sermons and the *vitae* as an unusually creative and forceful figure.

### *The medieval vitae: biographical profile*<sup>5</sup>

The main sources of our information about Humility's life are two related *vitae*, both composed shortly after her death in 1310. The first [*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* 4045], published by the Bollandists, was composed sometime between about 1311 and 1332, in

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<sup>4</sup> Although now outdated, the sermons were first discussed at length by Mauro Ercolani, *Vita di S. Umiltà, fondatrice delle monache vallombrosane* (Pescia, 1910). Most recently, see the important contributions of Adele Simonetti: "I sermoni di Umiltà da Faenza: storia della tradizione," *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser., 32 (1991) 303–8; her fine introduction to the critical edition cited in note 1 above; and "La tradizione manoscritta e le edizioni a stampa dei *Sermones* di Umiltà da Faenza," in *San Nevolone e Santa Umiltà a Faenza nel sec. XIII*, ed. Domenico Sgubbi (Faenza, 1996) 125–38.

<sup>5</sup> For a general overview of Humility's life, see Gaspare Cantagalli, "Umiltà, abbadessa vallobrosana, santa," *Bibliotheca sanctorum* 12 (Rome, 1969) cols. 818–22.

Latin.<sup>6</sup> Although most scholars have assumed that the author was a Vallombrosan monk, often identified as Biagio, it has recently been suggested that an Augustinian canon regular composed this *vita*.<sup>7</sup> The second *vita*, written in Italian in 1345 by the Vallombrosan monk Silvestro Ardenti,<sup>8</sup> is closely associated with the Latin text, both texts perhaps drawing on a common, but now lost, exemplar.<sup>9</sup>

So accustomed are scholars to the standard stock incidents and descriptions of virtue characterizing medieval hagiographic depictions of holy individuals that one could overlook the plentiful evidence of Humility's personal authority and powers of persuasion as portrayed in her *vitae*. While many of the stories told about her indeed resemble those of other medieval saints, it is striking how many accentuate her strength, willfulness, independence, and creative gifts rather than other stereotypic saintly attributes such as obedience, asceticism, long-suffering, and worldly withdrawal—virtues which her hagiographers also cite but more quickly pass over. Thus the collective impact of episodes recounted in her *vitae* accentuates her power and leadership.

Humility was born about 1226 in Faenza, a city situated fifty-seven kilometers southwest of Ravenna in present-day Emilia-Romagna. She was christened Rosanna and although the sources fail to identify her family by name, they do specify that Rosanna descended from noble stock. A first consideration regarding her authority then must take into account her privileged social position and the sense of entitlement it likely engendered. Indeed, after

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<sup>6</sup> "Vita S. Humilitatis," ed. Daniel Papebroch, in *Acta sanctorum*, May, vol. 5 (Paris, 1866) pars. 1–32, 207–14 [this *vita* hereafter cited as "Vita," AASS]. The text may also be found in *Sermones S. Humilitatis de Faventia*, ed. Torello Sala (Florence, 1884) 13–38. An English translation of the *vita* has been published in *Consolation of the Blessed*, trans. Elizabeth Alvida Petroff (Millerton, N.Y., 1979) 121–37.

<sup>7</sup> On the identification of the author as Biagio, see Francesco Lanzoni, "Una vita del Beato Novellone faentino terziario francescano (†1280)," in *Storia ecclesiastica e agiografica faentina dal XI al XV secolo*, ed. Giovanni Lucchesi (Città del Vaticano, 1969) 251–2, note *e*. On Biagio, see Torello Sala, "Biagio (D.)," in *Dizionario storico biografico di scrittori, letterati ed artisti dell'ordine di Vallombrosa*, 2 vols. (Florence, 1929) 1:73–5. Réginald Grégoire, "S. Umiltà, religiosa vallombrosana (†1310)," 75–89, in *San Nevolone e Santa Umiltà*, ed. Sgubbi, 77, note 7, suggests an Augustinian canon regular as the likely author.

<sup>8</sup> *Vita della beata Umiltà faentina, testo inedito del buon secolo della lingua toscana*, ed. Francesco Zambrini (Imola, 1849); see p. 65 for author and date. See select bibliography at the end of this article under [Biagio?]. *Le Vite*.

<sup>9</sup> This is the opinion of Simonetti, ed., *I sermoni*, xiv–xvii.

her identification as noble and brief references to her obedience, prayerfulness, and generosity, the sources state that she was so confident of her relationship with the saint, John the Evangelist, that "she knew she could obtain whatever she wanted" from God.<sup>10</sup> The remainder of both *vitae* bears this out. Among the first things she wanted—against her parents' wishes—and achieved were to dress poorly, give their money away, and refuse the marriage proposal of no less a suitor than a relative of Emperor Frederick II. Rosanna's rejection was so categorical in fact that the young man gave up immediately rather than waste his energy trying to change her mind.<sup>11</sup>

Shortly after her father died, Rosanna married the nobleman Ugolotto Caccianemici, out of necessity according to most scholars, although neither *vita* states this and both assert that she lived happily with her husband, leaving open the possibility that her own preference played some part in the decision.<sup>12</sup> Marriage did little to weaken Rosanna's forceful personality: she continually kept after Ugolotto to live celibately with her. When he laughed at the suggestion, she turned to prayer and succeeded in bringing down upon her beloved an illness so dangerous that sexual activity meant his certain death. Rosanna's next triumph of will was to persuade him, under pretext of protecting his health, to join a religious order and allow her to do likewise. The two joined the monastery of St Perpetua, she as a sister, and he, disinclined but anxious to please her, as an extern brother.<sup>13</sup>

After some years, her name by then changed,<sup>14</sup> Humility yearned for a solitary life beyond the confines of the monastery.<sup>15</sup> Abandoning one's monastery was, of course, a flagrant violation of religious custom. Although Humility saw no human way to escape her situation, she learned in divine contemplation—and

<sup>10</sup> "Vita," par. 2, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 1.

<sup>11</sup> "Vita," pars. 2–3, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 2–4.

<sup>12</sup> "Vita," par. 4, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 5.

<sup>13</sup> "Vita," pars. 4–5, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 5–7. The Italian *vita* calls him "brother" rather than "extern brother" and adds the detail regarding his reluctance and desire to please her.

<sup>14</sup> "Vita," par. 5, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 8.

<sup>15</sup> On the theme of the desert in the *vitae* of Humility and other Italian holy women, see Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, "She Seemed to Have Come from the Desert': Italian Women Saints and the *Vitae Patrum* Cycle," in *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York, 1994) 110–36, especially 117–20.

lost no time announcing confidently to her sisters—that she would be “leaving the monastery Saturday and would, without fail, have whatever she earnestly demanded”. Given the high walls enclosing the women and the strict guard the extern brothers kept at their gate, no one took her seriously. That Saturday, Humility was gone.<sup>16</sup>

After her escape, a series of influential figures, including the abbess of the Sisters of Saint Clare, a prior of a nearby monastery, an uncle who was a knight, and sundry brothers and religious renowned for their sanctity, besieged Humility with arguments that she return to the monastery she had so audaciously fled.<sup>17</sup> She adamantly refused, but would agree to be enclosed in a cell alongside the Vallombrosan church and monastery of St Apollinaris, to whose abbot Crispino she dutifully promised obedience.<sup>18</sup> This satisfied both her desire for reclusion and the ecclesiastical principle that one could be freed from one form of religious life only by undertaking a stricter form.

Despite Humility's solitary confinement during the next twelve years—and in a very real sense because of it—her commanding presence continued to make itself felt. A small window was built into the wall of her cell so that she could accept alms, offer advice, or otherwise attend to visitors from the surrounding community.<sup>19</sup> Her severe austerities, which included a strict fast maintained during nineteen days of ecstatic contemplation, made her something of a sensation in the eyes of the Vallombrosan monks living beside her. Her husband Ugolotto, concluding he could not live without her, gave up life as an extern brother in the first monastery they had entered together and became himself a Vallombrosan monk in the monastery near her cell, even though he would never again be allowed to see her. The *vitae* relate that Ugolotto promised obedience not only to the male monastic superior, but also, remarkably, to Humility, who by that time had somehow been similarly designated “Superior”.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> “*Vita*,” par. 8, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 11–13. The Latin omits these episodes, mentioning only her encounter with the Sisters of Saint Clare and adding the detail that her relative was a knight: “*Vita*,” par. 9, AASS.

<sup>18</sup> “*Vita*,” pars. 8–10, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 11–14.

<sup>19</sup> “*Vita*,” par. 10, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 14.

<sup>20</sup> “*Vita*,” par. 12, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 16–17. The specific terms are, in Latin, *Praelatus/Praelata*; and, in Italian, *prelato/prelata*.

Humility's magnetism attracted women aspiring to the holy life as well. They pleaded with the Vallombrosan prior to allow them to build cells near to hers. In a short-lived show of force he declared that the monks wanted nothing to do with women, that Humility's case had been an exception. Although legally subject to him, Humility, now about forty, immediately overruled the prior by invoking the will of the Virgin Mary who, in a vision, had commanded Humility to found a monastery for women. After the vision, she received further backing for her project from the bishop of Faenza and various abbots, including the abbot of Vallombrosa himself.<sup>21</sup> Her spiritual renown by then was so great that the people of Faenza acclaimed her as a saint.<sup>22</sup>

Fifteen years later, with her monastery in Faenza firmly established, Humility set out, at the behest of her heavenly confidant John the Evangelist, to found another monastery in the influential city of Florence. She and a few companions courageously traveled through lands made dangerous by war, thieves, and assassins. When they reached the city, prelates, clergy, religious, and laity received her joyously and again acclaimed her as a living saint. Humility's new foundation proved even more challenging than the first. Lodged in temporary quarters for several years, she managed to acquire land and began the arduous process of constructing a monastery and church. The task of superintending these building projects no doubt demanded constant attention and, according to explicit testimony in the *vita*, she herself contributed to them by gathering stones from a river and carting them by donkey to the building site.<sup>23</sup> Important corroborative evidence of her construction projects can be found in an early eighteenth-century manuscript copy of medieval licenses and indulgences that were granted regarding the projects.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ardenti, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 19–20. “*Vita*,” pars. 12–13, AASS, reports simply that women had already constructed cells nearby and fails to note any interactions with the prior. The Latin hagiographer further specifies that the abbot of Vallombrosa was the abbot general of the entire Vallombrosan order.

<sup>22</sup> Ardenti, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 20; the Latin *vita* omits this point.

<sup>23</sup> “*Vita*,” pars. 17–18, AASS; Ardenti, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 39–41. References to the church she constructed appear in “*Vita*,” par. 19, AASS; Ardenti, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 46.

<sup>24</sup> See Franca Arduini, “Una propaggine di controriforma nella Firenze tardomedicea,” *Studi urbinati di storia, filosofia e letteratura* 48 (1974) 85–6.

Despite their sometimes stereotypic character and embellishment with marvelous details, these and other episodes allow medieval and modern reader alike to discern that Humility stood out among her contemporaries and especially among women as a purposeful, self-assured, and authoritative individual. Confident even as a girl that she was divinely favored, she was sure as well of all her human undertakings. In keeping with medieval religious expectations, she of course interpreted all of her actions as mere consequences of her obedience to the divine will. Her resolute nature hardly surprises when her deeds fall within the bounds of conventional medieval sanctity—her girlish refusal to conform to her parents' desires, her adolescent reluctance to marry, and her wifely desire to live celibately. Other deeds, however, suggest a decidedly willful character: she deserted a respectable monastery; she refused the entreaties of ecclesiastical authorities to return; subsequently, as a recluse, she informed the prior to whom she had promised obedience that she would be founding a monastery for women despite his instructions to the contrary. Her Italian hagiographer, especially, is at pains to explain these episodes. Given Humility's boldness, it is hardly surprising to hear her Latin hagiographer allude to the existence of "her detractors" and their apparent complaints against her which he describes as "bleating".<sup>25</sup>

There are of course other episodes commonly found in medieval *vitae*, including miraculous cures, visionary experiences, and prophetic intuitions. But the sheer quantity of stories chronicling her initiative and leadership, be they the standard stock of hagiographic convention or unique to Humility, establishes a key leitmotif: Humility, in the eyes of her myth-making hagiographers and apparently her contemporaries as well, was a woman of irrepressible creative drive.

*The depiction of Humility as author within the vitae*

A woman this consistently resolute in her actions was a woman who would venture even to teach, not only women but also men; and not merely in ephemeral words, but also in enduring script. Both her hagiographers laid the groundwork for Humility's

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<sup>25</sup> "Vita," Prologue, par. 1, AASS.

exceptional role as author of discourses which they identify as "sermons" by first recounting an episode about her miraculous acquisition of Latin.

According to her Latin hagiographer, when Humility was residing in the monastery of St Perpetua near Faenza and at a time in her life when she was totally illiterate or simply did not know how to read well [*cum esset illitterata*] some of the other nuns in the monastery asked her to read to them, as was the custom, at the second meal. The ambiguity here regards the word *illitterata* which could indicate that she was little learned in Latin<sup>26</sup> or, as most of her interpreters have assumed, that she was entirely illiterate.<sup>27</sup> In any case, her sisters recognized that she was inadequate to the task but directed her to read anyway so that they might have a rest and perhaps also a bit of fun. Humility bowed her head, took up the book, opened it to the appropriate place, and began speaking: "Despise not the works of God, because they are all true and just." The hagiographer continues:

besides this, with her eyes fixed heavenward, she spoke such lofty things that she excited the entire convent. All came running to see the spectacle and the astonishing wonder. And when the sign was given to her to finish, she ended, as was fitting, saying: "You, however...", having been taught so exceedingly well by the holy Spirit. No one, either before or after, was ever able to find what she had read inside that volume. From that time forward, the convent took care that she learn letters—which she did learn—by giving to her a woman teacher.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For example, the *vita* of John of Alverna (†1322) provides abundant evidence regarding his schooling and literacy: "*Vita B. Joannis*," chap. 1, pars. 7, 9, AASS, Aug., vol. 2 (Paris, 1867) 460–1; chap. 2, par. 14, 462. Yet it also describes him as *illiteratus et simplex*, terms clearly intended to indicate a relative rather than total lack of literacy and education: Prologue, par. 1, 459; and chap. 2, par. 21, 463.

<sup>27</sup> See the Bollandists' marginal comment to "*Vita*," par. 6, AASS; Sala, "Umiltà (Santa) Badessa," in *Dizionario storico biografico*, vol. 2, 296; M.E. Pietromarchi, *Santa Umiltà Negusanti, nobile faentina* (Faenza, 1935) 20–2; Petroff, "The Rhetoric of Transgression in the *Lives* of Italian Women Saints," in *Body and Soul*, 171–2; Simonetti, ed., *I sermoni*, xiii.

<sup>28</sup> *Die quadam Sorores, cum esset illitterata, eam vocarunt, et ut legeret secundae mensae, ut mos est Monialium, solatiose ut aestimo injunxerunt ... Nolite despiciere opera Dei, quia omnia vera et justa sunt: super quo tam ardua, in coelum erectis semper luminibus, dixit, quod totum Conventum currentem ad spectaculum ac admirationem mirabilem excitavit: et dum sibi signum terminationis factum fuit, dicendo, Tu autem, uti decuit, spiritu sancto edocta optime terminavit. Quae autem legit, nullus unquam in praefato codice prius vel post penitus adinvenit: et ex tunc Conventus, data sibi doctrice, ipsam litteras, quas et didicit, discere procuravit.* "*Vita*," par. 6, AASS, 208. All

Whether or not Humility was actually reading on this occasion is not entirely clear. Since her eyes were turned upward while she spoke so loftily, and since no one was ever able to find the passage, one might argue that she spoke from inspiration. On the other hand, the hagiographer begins the passage by drawing the reader's attention to Humility's degree of literacy; he notes that she turned to the correct place in the book; he alludes to what "she had read" (*quae autem legit*); and he closes with the fact that the convent, astonished by this wonder, thereafter assigned a woman to teach her to read. Clearly, the fact of her relative or total lack of Latin literacy, miraculously overcome in the above incident, is central to the passage's meaning.

The Italian *vita* differs only slightly. Rather than calling her "illiterate" or "unlettered" the hagiographer says that she had little education in reading (*non fusse in leggere molto ammaestrata*), perhaps reflecting a more accurate meaning of the Latin term *illitterata*. The Italian version furthermore does not bother to say that Humility was later assigned a nun to teach her to read. The salient point of both the Latin and Italian accounts is that Humility's ability to read, whether she was starting from total or only relative illiteracy, was inspired rather than acquired from a human source. Both versions, it is worth noting, state in their respective passages that she was "taught by the Holy Spirit".<sup>29</sup>

It is also much to the point to note that the miraculous acquisition of Latin literacy is a feature found in other women's *vitae* in this period. For example, Clare of Montefalco (†1308) and the nuns in Cristina of Lucca's (†1310) monastery, starting from little or no knowledge of Latin, all miraculously acquired Latin literacy.<sup>30</sup> Even more significant is the case of Margaret of Faenza, Humility's own disciple and successor as abbess. Although Humility tells her to "study, learn how to read, for you shall be abbess", Margaret abandoned her teacher, believing firmly that the omnipotent Lord would open her senses to the deep understanding of Scripture.

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translations are mine.

<sup>29</sup> "Vita," par. 6, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Berengar of Sant'Africano, *Storia di S. Chiara da Montefalco secondo un antico documento dell'anno 1308*, ed. P. T. De Töth (Siena, 1908) 77–8; "Vita della B. Oringa Cristiana fondatrice del venerabile convento di S. Maria Novella," in vol. 18, *Deliciae eruditorum seu veterum: anekdhoton opusculorum collectanea*, ed. Giovanni Lami (Florence, 1769) chaps. 26–29, 208–11; see also chap. 35, 215–6; chap. 69, 24.



When her confessor John later asked her while reading to her in Latin if she wanted him to read to her in the vernacular, she replied, "not at all, because I understand quite well".<sup>31</sup> In these and other instances, hagiographers regularly contrasted the inspired learning and literacy of female saints with mere book learning, a skill that throughout most of the medieval period had been deemed a male and, more specifically, clerical prerogative. While clerical education had been steadily improving since the high medieval period, in part owing to a heightened awareness regarding the necessity of good preaching, women's authority to preach and teach, in the eyes of their male patrons, confessors, and hagiographers, could rest solely upon divine inspiration. Although education for the laity, including women like Humility from more privileged backgrounds, had also expanded, the tradition-laden genre of hagiography was naturally predisposed to explain women's literacy by recourse to the ancient trope of unlearned women outshining learned men.

Only subsequent to their accounts of Humility's miraculous learning do her hagiographers refer to her book of sermons. The Latin *vita* reports that Humility was once dictating in the cloister,

to a nun who was writing down what the abbess was saying to her, in abbreviated form, to wit, the book concerning angels, and the soul, and many other very good sermons.<sup>32</sup>

The Latin for this last phrase, which I hear translate as "many other good sermons", is *de multis sermonibus valde bonis*, a phrase which could also be interpreted as "many other very good sayings".

The hagiographer signals the importance of this book by other comments. He points out that the book, at the time he writes, can be found in this same monastery. In another signal to the reader that Humility's words were inspired words, he recounts that two nuns once saw an exceedingly white dove with golden feet resting on the abbess's shoulders, and it held its golden beak to her ear while she was having the book written (*scribi faceret ... librum*). On yet another occasion, while Humility was having her dictation recorded (*dum scribi faceret*), rain fell throughout the entire monastery,

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<sup>31</sup> John of Faenza, "*Revelationes et miracula*," chap. 1, par. 1, AASS, Aug., vol. 5 (Paris, 1868) 851.

<sup>32</sup> "*Vita*," par. 30, AASS.

except upon her back and shoulders, an event apparent to everyone in the cloister.<sup>33</sup> It is clear from these comments that Humility composed her book over a period of time, that she dictated her words—or sermons (*sermonibus*)—to another nun scribe, and that she consciously intended them to be fashioned into a book.

The Italian hagiographer similarly reports that a sister wrote,

certain treatises which Humility was just then composing (that she called *the book of angels and the soul*), and many devout and holy *Sermons*; which book is held by the nuns of Florence ...<sup>34</sup>

Here it appears that “certain treatises” which she dictated are called “the book of angels and the soul” and that the same book also contains “many devout and holy *sermons*” (*Sermoni*). In any event, both *vitae* introduce the term “sermons”. Whereas in Latin, it could mean simply “sayings”, in the Italian *vita* the term clearly suggests hortatory discourses.

That these dictated pieces are the same book now known as her *Sermons* is certain because the very subjects identified by both hagiographers, the angels and the soul, constitute important themes within the *Sermons*, which are themselves didactic, hortatory, and meditative in nature. Furthermore, although the subject is beyond the scope of this essay to address in detail, it is important to bear in mind that Humility herself periodically calls her discourses “sermons” (*sermone*), a term which often meant “homily” or “sermon” in this period.<sup>35</sup>

*The sermons: Humility's authority in her own words*

The *Sermons* survive in few manuscripts. Both the Latin *vita* and the Italian *vita* note that Humility's book of sermons was held by the nuns in the Florentine monastery of John the Evangelist, which is where Humility died. Although this original manuscript was no longer extant by the seventeenth century, a fourteenth-century copy of it still survived at that time. Whether or not other medieval copies of the sermons were made is not known. Since none are

<sup>33</sup> “*Vita*,” par. 30, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 37–38.

<sup>34</sup> Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chaps. 37–38.

<sup>35</sup> In references to Humility's sermons, Roman numerals identify the sermons, followed by Arabic numerals to indicate the relevant lines. For examples of her use of the term *sermo*, see *I sermoni* I.57; VIII.347; XI.121.

known to be extant and no references to any have been found, it is possible that they circulated among a relatively circumscribed audience. The surviving fourteenth-century copy of the sermons was copied independently in its entirety by two Vallombrosan monks, Virginio Moscardi<sup>36</sup> in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and Giovanni Aurelio Casari<sup>37</sup> in 1687. In the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, another Vallombrosan, Placido Poltri,<sup>38</sup> likewise copied, for the Bollandists, extensive portions from the medieval manuscript. Even though this important fourteenth-century copy of the sermons was itself lost sometime in the eighteenth century, scholars can be reasonably assured of the accuracy of the later copies. In 1707, Florentine notaries confirmed that Moscardi's transcription of a century earlier was faithful to the medieval copy. This, coupled with the fact that there is significant agreement among the early modern transcriptions made, each independently, of the fourteenth-century copy, provides critical evidence that these are generally faithful transcriptions of the now lost manuscript.<sup>39</sup> The first complete edition of the sermons was published by Torello Sala in 1884.<sup>40</sup> It has now been superseded by the important contribution of Adele Simonetti who in 1995 published the first critical edition of the sermons.<sup>41</sup>

Humility's sermons provide relatively little explicit testimony regarding the details of her own life. She focuses her attention instead on spiritual topics, which she elaborates in effusive figurative language. Mary, for example, is the prepared banquet table to which we have been invited.<sup>42</sup> Christ's humanity is a young woman; the blood of his passion is represented by rivers.<sup>43</sup> She devotes special attention not only to Jesus and Mary, but also to heavenly beings with whom she shared special relationships, such as the angels Emmanuel and Sapiel,<sup>44</sup> John the Evangelist, and his brother James.

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<sup>36</sup> Sala, *Dizionario storico biografico*, 2:83–5.

<sup>37</sup> Sala, *Dizionario storico biografico*, 1:123–4.

<sup>38</sup> Sala, *Dizionario storico biografico*, 2:149–51.

<sup>39</sup> Simonetti, ed., *I sermoni*, lxxix; and see lxxix–lxxiv for a more detailed discussion of these manuscripts and their history.

<sup>40</sup> *Sermones S. Humilitatis de Faventia* (Florence, 1884).

<sup>41</sup> Cited above, note 1.

<sup>42</sup> *I sermoni* III.203.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, *I sermoni* IV.

<sup>44</sup> Humility identifies Emmanuel and Sapiel as her guardian angels.

Interwoven throughout these various discourses are important clues regarding Humility's perspective on the sources of her authority. Like most medieval authors professing to pass on inspired words, Humility must explain to her audience why her words merit attention. This was especially important in Humility's case since women were so seldom looked to as teachers and spiritual advisors. In theory, if not always in fact, women were not allowed to preach, thus the hortatory nature of her sermons needed clear justification.<sup>45</sup>

While for most medieval holy women we have only the assertions of their male hagiographers regarding the women's views, in Humility's case we can compare her own testimony with that of her hagiographers. Humility's and her hagiographers' interpretations of her authority both agree and diverge.

The most striking point of agreement, albeit an argument from silence in the *Sermons* and the *vitae*, is the relative lack of struggle and doubt within Humility herself regarding the composition of the sermons. Although she occasionally alludes to herself in self-deprecating terms such as "wretched and useless servant"<sup>46</sup> and entreats God and other heavenly figures for help in her task, she does not appear to experience the same level of conflict and doubt about revealing and writing her spiritual insights as many other female mystics and writers. Furthermore, Humility's hagiographers report her composition of her book of sermons without ever mentioning any female self-diffidence on her part about making public her private ruminations. Perhaps most telling is the fact that neither Humility nor her hagiographers ever identify any confessor or male superior who compelled her to write against her wishes, an anecdote commonly repeated—and perhaps sincerely felt as well—by numerous women writers and their hagiographers. And nowhere in the sermons or *vitae* is there any hint that Humility sought or received clerical authorization for her writings. Her apparent independence in these respects sets her apart from other notable writers such as Hildegard of Bingen (†1179), Mechthild of Magdeburg (†ca. 1282), Gertrude the Great (†1302), Angela of Foligno (†1309), and Margaret Ebner (†1351).

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<sup>45</sup> In keeping with the medieval prohibition that women not preach, neither Humility nor her hagiographers ever refer to her as a preacher.

<sup>46</sup> For example, *I sermoni* XIII.132.

On the other hand, in keeping with virtually all medieval female prophets and mystics, Humility sometimes explains the authority of her words by attributing them to God. Her statements generally corroborate claims made in both *vitae* which each recount an episode in which a dove, clearly representing the Holy Spirit, spoke into her ear as she dictated her sermons.

In the sermons, however, Humility names all three persons of the Trinity as sources for her inspiration. She writes, for example, that her listeners

should note that the divine sermon I speak is not from me, but rather belongs to the Father of the most high God.<sup>47</sup>

Elsewhere, she says "Jesus speaks in me".<sup>48</sup> She entreats God to help her recount well the events surrounding Jesus' incarnation so that she may "bear forth a praiseworthy sermon and have it written in a book".<sup>49</sup> On other occasions, Humility specifies that it is the Holy Spirit who speaks through her. In an oft-cited passage where she addresses the fact that she speaks in the name of divine beings, she asks and answers:

And how is it that I dare to do such things? Did you not hear how I said and how I spoke? Because in me the Spirit of God speaks and my Lord lives, to whom is honor and authority. He deigns to fill my mouth, and the most blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, that divine heavenly Queen, whom I know that I have as a teacher. To her be praise, glory, strength, power, and authority ...<sup>50</sup>

In the above passage, Humility suggests that her inspired knowledge comes not only from God, but also, in a certain sense, from Mary. Elsewhere she also couples Mary and the Holy Spirit in explaining her inspiration. In a long discourse of praise devoted to Mary, she comments on the inspired character of the words she, a sinner, fashioned on the feast of Mary's Assumption:

Oh most blessed Mary, you well know the truth. This laud arose of its own accord; it cannot be hidden from you. It is entirely just and true, without any falsity, because it was given by you, by your merits to the soul of a sinner who neither deserved to invoke you nor, from her own intelligence, knew how to praise you. She came upon this laud on your feast in August. On that great solemnity the

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<sup>47</sup> *I sermoni* II.8-10.

<sup>48</sup> *I sermoni* VIII.240.

<sup>49</sup> *I sermoni* I.56-58.

<sup>50</sup> *I sermoni* III.229-34.

Holy Spirit wrote in her heart and mind, what her mouth spoke, because, as the omnipotent God well knows, nothing of [what was said] was written. Rather, the Holy Spirit speaks.<sup>51</sup>

Somewhat more unusual among medieval holy women are Humility's frequent allusions to Mary alone as divine teacher. For example, acknowledging her own inability to demonstrate the aptness of identifying Mary with the biblical figure of the "prepared table", she says:

Oh infallible Queen! Oh Empress of all! ... You wish to help me so that I may prove that the aforesaid name is truly yours, my Lady, because I did not come upon it save only in my soul. And I am certain that this is your will, and that you work with me, Lady, so that what I apprehend in the soul I may bear forth on my lips, such that no misconception may be left with those listening.<sup>52</sup>

Elsewhere, speaking directly to her audience, she affirms:

If I make known or expound salvation to you, or offer holy words, it is not owing to my own strength. May you not give any glory to me because although my tongue speaks, the words are not mine. For I do not stand before you as a teacher: how could I have taught you? May you render praises to the Queen because goodness belongs to her. She truly is the teacher of all peoples who wish to learn from her.<sup>53</sup>

Humility is empowered to speak, however, not only by God and his virtually equally divine mother, but by the entire celestial court. Together these heavenly beings constitute a world, an otherworldly society, within which Humility positions herself and from which she derives heavenly authority. In this, she stands apart from most medieval teachers and preachers, male and female.

The most notable among her heavenly consorts is her trusted companion John the Evangelist. In her first sermon, where she appears to be commenting on the difficulty of the compositional work that lies ahead of her, Humility implores both Mary and John the Evangelist to help her begin by giving her "some words" from their own mouths. So in harmony are these two with each other that they speak to Humility practically "with one voice". She tells her listeners to attend well to the "words of salvation and

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<sup>51</sup> *I sermoni* ix.717–21; 725–8.

<sup>52</sup> *I sermoni* iii.187–93.

<sup>53</sup> *I sermoni* iii.81–6.

divine erudition" which they have given her.<sup>54</sup> She speaks of John in uncommonly expansive language:

Indeed, you, who see everywhere and from whom nothing can be hidden, well know the truth. In truth, these words are not my own, because [I am] not fit to authorize [them] and [am] unable to create [them]. You truly are the teacher, the origin [*causa*] of my dictation. I indeed am the words you, however, who know the truth, speak according to your will... [You are] teacher and dictator, and true witness<sup>55</sup> ... You, moreover, are my royal teacher ... and you teach me to speak and to know the truth<sup>56</sup> ... The first witness [regarding what I say] is [my] teacher-dictator, who dictated this sermon ... The teacher does not err ... He always speaks the truth, doing good, because the words he spoke from his mouth [and] wrote with his hand, are not this-worldly words.<sup>57</sup>

Humility elsewhere attests that she has received responses to her questions and entreaties from other heavenly beings to whom she also attributes her words, including John the Evangelist's brother James, her two angels Emmanuel and Sapiel, and the saints Catherine, Agnes, and Cecilia.<sup>58</sup>

Humility shifts from one perspective to another in her sermons: at times she speaks about these heavenly figures and their significance, at other times she enters into direct and intimate converse with them, and at yet other times she assumes the very voice of these beings as if she were a simple conduit through whom they spoke in the first person.<sup>59</sup> Her self-positioning vis-à-vis these members of the heavenly court differs significantly from her hagiographers' understanding of her authority. They no doubt recognized the extravagant nature of her claims and were concerned to present her in a thoroughly orthodox light. Thus, Mary, who plays a rather minor role in the *vitae*, is described in conventional terms as Christ-carrier, queen, and patroness, but not as a source of Humility's holy words.<sup>60</sup> And although John the

<sup>54</sup> *I sermoni* i.112-4; 136-40.

<sup>55</sup> *I sermoni* vii.101-5, 114.

<sup>56</sup> *I sermoni* viii.247-9.

<sup>57</sup> *I sermoni* viii.346-50.

<sup>58</sup> *I sermoni* xii.154-68.

<sup>59</sup> On the subject of Humility's relationships with heavenly personages and their role as sources of revelation, see also Simonetti's remarks, *I sermoni*, xl-xliii, xlv-xlvi.

<sup>60</sup> "Vita," par. 2, AASS [*Christifera; praecipua...matrona; Regina*]; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 1 [*spezial matrona e donna; regina*]. The Italian *vita* gives a slightly expanded role to Mary who, for example, helped force Humility's husband into chastity [chap. 5] and, in a vision, commanded her to found the

Evangelist plays a prominent role in both *vitae*, even appearing to her to tell her to found her second monastery in Florence, he is nonetheless never represented as a source of Humility's revelation. Rather, he is called her procurator or overseer.<sup>61</sup>

Humility's self-presentation with regard to her knowledge of Latin also interestingly differs from her hagiographic portrayals. If indeed she acquired her Latin, whether in part or fully, through an act of divine intervention, one would expect her to say so. Throughout her sermons she regularly apprises her readers of various divine favors she has received. To attribute her knowledge of Latin to God would be yet one more way to glorify him, but never does she make such a statement. She does, however, mention Latin in such a way that an inventive hagiographer—and indeed, resourceful creativity was a requisite skill of virtually all hagiographers—could use it as the foundation for a more elaborate narrative regarding miraculous literacy. Commenting on her authoritative invitations to her listeners to come to a fountain of which she herself was ignorant, she says:

I very much wonder, and in astonishment, I fear and blush with shame regarding this thing which I say and dare to write, for I did not learn from a book and I am ignorant of grammar.<sup>62</sup>

"Grammar" at this time was an unambiguous reference to Latin.

Humility's self-stated ignorance of Latin, however, was obviously not absolute. All the sources suggest and modern scholars agree that she dictated her sermons in Latin. However, her Latin is also recognized to be relatively simple and to contain numerous grammatical errors. What Humility meant when she said she was ignorant [*ignorare*] of Latin can be likened to the then common use of *illitteratus* to indicate an elementary rather than a refined knowledge of Latin or Latin texts. She was ignorant of many of its rules and employed a syntax which was at best rudimentary.<sup>63</sup> And, of course, her remark dovetails quite nicely with her tendency throughout the sermons to attribute all of her knowledge to divine

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monastery in Faenza [chap. 19].

<sup>61</sup> "Vita," par. 2, AASS [*procurator*]; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 2 [*procuratore*].

<sup>62</sup> *I sermoni* III.226–8.

<sup>63</sup> Simonetti, ed., *I sermoni*, lxxxv–lxxxvii, details the more salient irregularities in Humility's Latin.



rather than human sources such as books. At the outset of a long discourse on Mary, for example, she urges her listeners:

Let us hold these praises [*laudes*] of the Virgin Mary, which were not drawn from a book or from any text, in great devotion.<sup>64</sup>

If Humility had thought that her knowledge of Latin had come to her through an act of divine intervention, she certainly would have stated this clearly. Whether or not her medieval hagiographers recognized that Humility meant only to be self-deprecating and honest regarding her mastery of Latin and simply embellished the story to accord with other stereotypic examples of unlearned female saints who miraculously acquired Latin literacy little matters. Their version edified their listeners and thus fulfilled a major objective of their hagiography.

Humility's protestations of modesty to the contrary and despite the fact that she seldom refers to the outer circumstances of her life—her foundation of two monasteries, her renown among clergy and laity as a religious leader, spiritual advisor, and miracle worker—the sermons do convey also her sense of authority and self-confidence. Her conviction that myriad divine beings spoke through her endowed her with an unshakable confidence in what she had to say, setting her apart from female mystics such as Angela of Foligno who recurrently expressed grave misgivings about the authenticity of their inspired teachings. In contrast, after referring to the inspirational roles played by Jesus and John the Evangelist in her life, Humility asserts:

Indeed, I know and believe certainly because I have not spoken out of ignorance. Rather that which I see, I know, and concerning what I think, I am not ignorant. On the contrary, I believe truly, and now I give witness.<sup>65</sup>

A sense of confident, even superior, intimacy marks Humility's relationship with her audience. Although it is not possible in this essay to discuss in detail the probable identity of her audience or audiences, it is clear that Humility felt a personal connection to those whom she addressed. She calls them her "dearest listeners" (*auditores mei carissimi*).<sup>66</sup> In the manner of many female mystics, she thinks of these listeners in familiar terms: they are her

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<sup>64</sup> *I sermoni* ix.14–6.

<sup>65</sup> *I sermoni* xii.86–8.

<sup>66</sup> For example, *I sermoni* iii.173, 243.

"brothers" and "sisters".<sup>67</sup> She is also their mother and spiritual nurturer, addressing them as her "children"<sup>68</sup> and, in a use of the diminutive which expresses both maternal tenderness and a certain benevolent superiority, she even calls them her "little children" (*filioli*).<sup>69</sup> It is clear that her audience includes male and female religious, probably from her own Vallombrosan order, and in this regard it is interesting to note her spiritual authority over both the sexes, a fact which echoes various episodes included in the *vitae*. She shows no reluctance lecturing either monks or nuns regarding their proper roles as religious.<sup>70</sup>

She intends her often lofty discourses to instill virtues in others, but also to "cut away vices" and to that end she asks her angels to "sharpen [her] tongue like a razor".<sup>71</sup> Regardless of whether or not this comment was addressed to her own nuns or others, it recalls an episode in the *vitae* in which Humility imprisoned one of her own sisters, a harsh measure, resolutely taken to bring about the nun's repentance and reform.<sup>72</sup>

One final point regarding Humility's commanding personality: she fully expected her sermons to be read. On this subject too, the sermons agree with the *vitae* which both indicate that she composed her discourses presuming that they would be gathered into a book.<sup>73</sup> Although it is beyond the purview of this essay to discuss whether Humility orally delivered her sermons or whether they circulated primarily or even solely as a written text, a close examination of the tenses she employs within the sermons reveals that she assumed they would be read and heard both in her own present moment and at a future time beyond it.<sup>74</sup> Nowhere in her extensive work is there a hint of fear on her part that her words might ever be ignored or lost to posterity.

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<sup>67</sup> For example, *I sermoni* III.256–7; VIII.119; IX.50.

<sup>68</sup> For example, *I sermoni* I.129; II.276, 293, 296, 352; III.2; VII.23, 31. This recalls also the Latin *vita* when the hagiographer, addressing himself to the Vallombrosan nuns, refers to Humility as *mater vestra et mea*: "Vita," Prologue, AASS.

<sup>69</sup> For example, *I sermoni* III.174; XII.126, 182.

<sup>70</sup> For example, *I sermoni* VIII.55–66.

<sup>71</sup> *I sermoni* X.290.

<sup>72</sup> "Vita," par. 13, AASS; Ardeni, *Vita della beata Umiltà*, chap. 21. The episode also underlines Humility's compassion.

<sup>73</sup> See pp. 132–3 above.

<sup>74</sup> For example, *I sermoni* II.8–9; IX.68.

*Conclusion*

The *vitae* about Humility present an image of the saint and her work as author of the sermons which both agrees with and diverges from the image which she herself presents in her sermons. The most striking differences can be largely explained by the varying purposes of each genre. In order to edify the faithful, Humility's hagiographers were bound to embellish certain details of her life, to underline the extraordinary aspects of her life, and perhaps even create others to enhance their subject's saintly image. They were further obliged to present her in as orthodox a light as possible. In contrast, Humility's purpose was simply to convey to her audience her experiences and understanding of spiritual realities.

In light of these divergent purposes, it is easy to understand how Humility and her hagiographers differ in the portrayal of her authority and inspiration. Humility's self-deprecating—and perhaps factual—statements regarding her lack of learning and limited knowledge of Latin are translated, in her hagiographers' compositions, into an episode of miraculously-acquired Latin literacy. To protect her from the appearance of unorthodoxy, they reduce Humility's many claims of inspiration by myriad celestial beings to the more conventional claim that she was inspired by the Holy Spirit. And to magnify the importance of such inspiration, they transform her simple assertion that she felt interiorly inspired—an experience with which many believers could easily identify to some extent—into the externally observed miracle of a dove speaking into her ear. Their narrative purpose forces them to enflish and make concrete Humility's disembodied intuitions of other-worldly realities. Their portrayal of the miraculous nature of her literacy and inspiration lays the essential groundwork for their subsequent depiction of her work as author of "many sermons", a literary achievement quite unusual for any woman, including a saint, and thus in need of special explanation.

On the other hand, the *vitae* and sermons present a common picture of Humility in more important respects. Even while drawing upon the standard stock of stories told of saints, the *vitae* clearly communicate that Humility was a self-confident individual gifted with a sense of purpose and the necessary resolve to achieve it. Her ability to get her way, whether as a young girl, wife, recluse,

monastic foundress, or abbess was remarkable by any measure. No theoretically higher authority could keep her from her goals. Although she makes little or no explicit reference in her sermons to any of the incidents reported in her *vitae*, she has ample opportunity to confirm the impressions her hagiographers create regarding her authoritative and creative personality. Well aware that she had little formal education, she was conscious of possessing sufficient authority not only to teach, but also to ensure that her teachings survived by committing them to page in the form of a book of sermons. Her sense of intimate connectedness with a host of divine personages endowed her with just the sort of conviction that could allow her to defy human authorities and convention. Because she recognized that her inspiration and authority were not her own, she was empowered to exhort not only nuns, but also monks. She spared no criticism in her sermons for those she perceived to be living inappropriately and forcefully denounced those who appeared beyond redemption.

In contrast to many other female prophets, her authority in the sermons and *vitae* seems wholly independent of any this-worldly male authority figures. Neither she nor her hagiographers make any allusion whatsoever to a confessor or male superior who guided her spiritually, encouraged her to write, or authorized her text. Her singularity in this regard is further enhanced by the very fact that, in contrast to virtually all other medieval women's texts of spiritual revelation, which come to us through the mediating influence of male scribes, editors, and co-authors, Humility dictated her sermons to one or more nuns. Her sermons are thus one of the few wholly female-authored texts to have survived from the medieval period.

Thus, despite the differences demarcating Humility's sermons from the *vitae* her hagiographers soon thereafter composed, she emerges from all of these texts as an independent, self-assured, and authoritative individual. Regardless of what one makes of her conviction and that of her hagiographers that her authority and inspiration derived wholly from her other-worldly associations, the modern reader can recognize in her an individual of uncommon this-worldly leadership and creative talent.

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## PREACHING BY THIRTEENTH-CENTURY ITALIAN HERMITS

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It is impossible to say what a hermit is with great precision.<sup>1</sup> In the realm of the medieval church, any consultation of that great body of definitions to be found in canonical or legislative texts shows us very little indeed. For example, we know that hermits could own property, and, according to Hostiensis, that they could make wills. Bernard of Parma's gloss briefly addresses the question of whether a hermit can be elected abbot of a monastery. The gloss of Gratian by Johannes Teutonicus says that "*solitarius*" means "*heremiticus*", and one would assume that the inverse would hold true.<sup>2</sup> Abandoning the realm of canon law, one does find something more helpful in the greatest legislative book for Western monks, the *Regula Benedicti*. Here, the Rule begins with a definition of four types of monks: two are good, and two are bad. The bad ones are the sarabaites—those who live in community but follow no rule—and the gyrovagues, who travel around continually and are, in Benedict's words, "slaves to their own wills and gross appetites".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Giles Constable's study on hermits in the twelfth century shows the great ambiguity in defining the eremitical life. See Giles Constable, "Eremitical Forms of Monastic Life," in *Monks, Hermits and Crusaders in Medieval Europe*, Collected Studies Series 273 (London, 1988) 239–64, at 240–1. See also Jean Leclercq, "'Eremus' et 'eremita'. Pour l'histoire du vocabulaire de la vie solitaire," *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorem* 25 (1963) 8–30.

<sup>2</sup> See: Hostiensis, *Summa aurea*, lib. 3 tit. "De testamentis et ultimis voluntatibus," =A7 8 (Lyon: Iacobus Giunta, 1537, fol. 162vb); Bernard of Parma's *Glossa ordinaria* to Gratian, x 1.4.13; and Johannes Teutonicus in his *Glossa ordinaria* to Gratian, C. 16 q. 1 c. 12 v. "*solitariam*". He also says in the *Glossa ordinaria* to C. 19 q. 3 d.p.c. 8 v. "*eremita*" that hermits can own property. (Both glosses appear in most editions of the *Corpus iuris canonici* published up to the early years of the seventeenth century.) James Brundage has kindly pointed out these canonical sources in a message to the medieval-religion electronic discussion list; I am grateful to him and to other list members, including Jessalynn Bird, Tom Izbicki, Maiju Lehmijoki, Eric Saak, and John Wickstrom, who contributed to this discussion (see, on the World Wide Web, <http://www.mailbase.ac.uk/lists/medieval-religion/1997-02/index.html>).

<sup>3</sup> *Tertium vero monachorum taeterrimum genus est sarabaitarum, qui nulla regula approbati, experientia magistra, sicut aurum fornacis, sed in plumbi natura molli,*

The good ones are the cenobites—those who belong to a monastery and live under a rule and an abbot—and the anchorites or hermits. The Rule describes this last group in the following manner:

[The hermits] have come through the test of living in a monastery for a long time, and have passed beyond the first fervor of monastic life. Thanks to the help and guidance of many, they are now trained to fight against the devil. They have built up their strength and go from the battle line in the ranks of their brothers to the single combat of the desert. Self-reliant now, without the support of another, they are ready with God's help to grapple single-handed with the vices of body and mind.<sup>4</sup>

So, in the eyes of Benedict, at least, the hermit was the practitioner *par excellence* of the religious vocation, and he lived his vocation in solitude; indeed, it has been argued in the *Downside Review* that Benedict saw the monk as one who would live eremitically from time to time.<sup>5</sup> It would seem that other people, in other times, held similar views. This is particularly the case with Benedict's countrymen, the people of the Italian peninsula, who apparently, in the later middle ages, had a particularly notable devotion to hermit saints.<sup>6</sup> I have been undertaking a census of Italian saints' cults up to the time of the Counter-Reformation, and I estimate that well over 2000 such cults existed at various places and times throughout the Italian peninsula. Of this number, several dozen are thirteenth- and fourteenth-century hermits.<sup>7</sup> Some of these hermits

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*adhuc operibus servantes saeculo fidem, mentiri Deo per tonsuram noscuntur ... Quantum vero genus est monachorum quod nominatur gyrovagum, qui tota vita sua per diversas provincias ternis aut quaternis diebus per diversorum cellas hospitantur, semper vagi et numquam stabiles, et propriis voluntatibus et gulae illecebris servientes, et per omnia deteriores sarabaitis (RB, chap. 1, 168–71).*

<sup>4</sup> *Deinde secundum genus est anachoritarum, id est eremitarum, horum qui non conversationis fervore novicio, sed monasterii probatione diuturna, qui didicerunt contra diabolum multorum solacio iam docti pugnare, et bene exstructi fraterna ex acie ad singularem pugnam eremi, securi iam sine consolatione alterius, sola manu vel brachio contra vitia carnis vel cogitationum, Deo auxiliante, pugnare sufficiunt (ibidem, 168–9).*

<sup>5</sup> Adrian Hastings, "St Benedict and the Eremitical Life," *Downside Review* 68 (1950) 191–211. Arguments raised by Hastings at times contrast with views expressed by a renowned product of the Downside community, David Knowles, in *The Benedictines, Many Mansions* (London, 1929) (see, e.g., p.97).

<sup>6</sup> André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du moyen âge d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques*, second edition, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 241 (Rome, 1988) 217; David Weinstein and R.M. Bell, "Saints and Society: Italian Saints of the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance," *Memorie Domenicane*, n.s., 4 (1973) 180–94.

<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this article, there will be no consideration of the

lived unattached to any religious congregation, as was the case (for example) with Gerard of Villamagna (†1242),<sup>8</sup> Torello of Poppi (†1282),<sup>9</sup> Marzio of Gualdo Tadino (†1301),<sup>10</sup> Giolo of Sellano (†1315),<sup>11</sup> and Martin of Genoa (†1343).<sup>12</sup> Others, such as Laurence of Subiaco (†1243),<sup>13</sup> John Buoni (†1249) and Peter of the Morrone (†1296), were attached to a group of religious men.<sup>14</sup>

The last two mentioned above are notable, among many other factors, for the extent to which they had pastoral contact with other people. This is striking when one considers that the qualities most often associated with saintly Italian hermits of that time are their asceticism and their thaumaturgical qualities.<sup>15</sup> Occasionally in the *vitae* of Italian hermit saints, there are anecdotes that reflect the nature of contact they would have had with lay people. For example, while Martin of Genoa lived on a rocky promontory of the Ligurian coast, in great number, boys would swim out to the tip of the small peninsula to visit him. There, Martin would offer them instruction, freely distribute bread to feed them, and seizing the moment he would instruct them on how they must be reverent toward God, and that they should be obedient to their parents.<sup>16</sup>

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cases of members of so-called eremitical orders, whether they be Carthusians, Camaldolensians, Vallombrosans, or Hermits of Saint Augustine (who, despite their name, lived not as hermits but as mendicant friars).

<sup>8</sup> See *Acta Sanctorum* [hereafter AA.SS.] Mai., 3 (Antwerp 1680) 247–50.

<sup>9</sup> See AA.SS. Mar., 2 (Antwerp 1668) 499–505; Giovanni Gualberto Goretti-Miniati, *Vita di san Torello da Poppi* (Rome, 1926); and Francesco Pasetto, *Il beato Torello da Poppi. Storie di santità, di superstizione e di magia nella Toscana del XIII secolo*, Itinerari. Dottrina esperienze testimonianze 23 (Bologna, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> See François Dolbeau, "Le légendier de San Francesco de Gualdo: tentative de reconstitution," *Bullettino della Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria* 72 (1976) 157–75; André Vauchez, "Frères mineurs, érémitisme et sainteté laïque," *Studi medievali*, ser. 3, 27:1 (1986) 353–81.

<sup>11</sup> See AA.SS. Iun., 2 (Antwerp 1698) 252–5.

<sup>12</sup> See AA.SS. Apr., 1 (Antwerp 1675) 102–5.

<sup>13</sup> See Réginald Grégoire, "Laurent l'encuirassé," *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, vol. 9 (Paris, 1976) col. 392–3; and the 1244 canonization process, as published in Benedict XIV, *Opera omnia*, vol. 3 (Prato, 1840) 662–93.

<sup>14</sup> On communal aspects of eremitical life in Italy, see Kaspar Elm, "Italienische Eremitengemeinschaften des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts," in *Eremitismo in Occidente nei secoli XI e XII. Atti della seconda Settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola, 30 agosto – 6 settembre 1962*, Pubblicazioni dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Contributi, Serie terza, Miscellanea del Centro di studi medioevali 4 (Milan, 1965) 503–529.

<sup>15</sup> Vauchez, *La sainteté*, 226–7.

<sup>16</sup> *Pueris aestivo tempore et magno numero ad promontorium istud convenientibus natandi gratia, commodam praebebat instructionem, eosdemque panem petentes benigne refocillabat, et tali occasione captata erudiebat, qua reverentiam Deo, quam parentibus*



Episodes such as this, however, are few in number and pale in comparison to those recounting the extreme disregard these men had for their own comfort: for example, Laurence of Subiaco, "full of lice", wore a bizarre coat of mail that continuously would rip his flesh.<sup>17</sup>

John Buoni, despite his name ("Buoni" or "Buonomini" is a family name), was not such a good man for much of his life.<sup>18</sup> When John's father died, the young man left his home in Mantua and made his living as an entertainer at the courts and palaces of northern Italy, leading a licentious and debauched life. But John had a devout mother whose prayers followed him wherever he traveled; and after a serious illness in 1208, at the age of 40, John made a vow to mend his ways. With the bishop of Mantua's permission, he took up an eremitical life, and soon attracted so many devotees and followers that he was obliged to build a church and arrange for his group to follow a rule. John's fame as a miracle worker brought people swarming to him, and he felt the need to leave secretly and start a new, more truly eremitical life elsewhere. So, in the middle of an especially dark night, he set out and walked until dawn, at which time he found himself standing before the door of his very own cell. Taking this as a sign to stay put, he remained there for most of the remaining four decades of his life. Although this episode may be an hagiographical embellishment, what is significant is the resolution of the event—John, frequented by so many people, did not flee their company but decided to stay where he was well known.<sup>19</sup>

During his eremitical life John would leave his cell only in order to console his brothers, or to speak to certain visitors who had requested an audience, or to hear Mass. But of what would he speak? One witness at his canonization process, brother Lanfranc, declared:

[John] would exhort his brothers to have and hold their faith in the holy Trinity as outlined in the Creed, which he would recite in the

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*suis deberent obedientiam* (AA.SS. Apr. 1:103D).

<sup>17</sup> Benedict xiv, *Opera omnia*, 3:690–3.

<sup>18</sup> For his *vita* and canonization process, see AA.SS. Oct., 9 (Brussels, 1858) 746–885; see also B. Van Luijk, *Gli eremiti neri nel Dugento. Origine, sviluppo e unione*, Biblioteca del Bollettino storico pisano, Collana storica 7 (Pisa, 1968).

<sup>19</sup> See the *vita* by Antoninus of Florence, AA.SS. Oct., 9: 746–7; here, 747D–E.

fashion of lay people, for he was illiterate; he also wished his brothers to believe whatever the holy Roman church believed.<sup>20</sup>

Another witness, brother Balis, went on to define some of these details:

... all the Articles of Faith, and that the lord pope was the vicar of God and successor of St Peter, and that he had the same authority as St Peter, and that those who did not believe this could not be saved; and he publicly denounced the belief of all Patarenes and excommunicates and all who did not believe according to the holy Roman church. He would warn his brothers to be extremely wary of such people, for in that state nobody could be saved, but were the children of the devil and of perdition. And he would also tell his brothers to hold in great reverence all clerics.<sup>21</sup>

This is as much as we know of the content of John's preaching and teaching. But what of its effects? Two people comment on this. The first witness, a local soldier named Guido Moroello, states briefly that:

Following the good words that John would say to those who would go to see and hear him, and also through seeing and hearing about the life that John was leading and had led for a long time, and by seeing and hearing about the miracles that the Lord worked daily through the merits and prayers of John, many of those who did not believe in the faith of the holy Roman church converted to the faith, and hold and observe the faith of all Catholics.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Et hortabatur fratres suos quod haberent et tenerent fidem Sanctissimae Trinitatis, ut continetur in symbolo, quod dicebat more laicali, quia illiteratus erat; et quod crederent quod credit sancta Romana Ecclesia* (AA.SS. Oct., 9:838E).

<sup>21</sup> ... *dicebat eis quod crederent omnes articulos fidei, et quod dominus papa erat vicarius Dei, et successor beati Petri et habebat eandem auctoritatem quam habuit beatus Petrus, et qui hoc non credent non poterunt salvari; et detestabatur publice fidem omnium Patarenorum, et excommunicatorum, et omnium qui non credebant sicut credit sancta romana ecclesia; et monebat fratres suos, quod caverent sibi a talibus, quia in tali statu numquam salvari poterant, sed erant filii diaboli, et perditionis; et dicebat fratribus suis quod haberent in reverentia magna omnes clericos ...* (ibidem, 817B). John was not alone in preaching against Frederick II; for a discussion of a lay woman preaching against Frederick and his followers, see: Darleen Pryds, "Proclaiming Sanctity: Rose of Viterbo," in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, eds. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkeley, 1998) 159–72.

<sup>22</sup> ... *propter bona verba quae dictus frater Joannes Bonus dicebat illis, qui ibant ad videndum eum et audiendum, et etiam videndo et audiendo vitam, quam ipse frater Joannes Bonus ducebat, et longo tempore duxerat, et videndo et audiendo miracula, quae Dominus meritis et orationibus dicti fratris Joannis Boni operabatur quotidie, multi ex illis, qui non credebant in fidem sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae, conversi sunt ad fidem, et tenent, et observant eam tanquam catholici homines* (AA.SS. Oct., 9:834C).

So, according to the witness Guido, John's preaching was part of a conversion package, of the holy man's *bona verba*, example and miracles: *de verbo, exemplo et miraculis*. The second of the two relevant witnesses is a "*magister Jacobinus carpentarius*" of Cesena, who told the story of his father:

a heretic and an evil person, who did not believe the faith of the holy Trinity and the holy Roman church, and with this evil faith was dead, as this witness believed, in soul and in body.<sup>23</sup>

The witness, Jacobinus, persuaded by his evil father, became a Patarene himself. Whenever he could successfully argue against even the slightest word of any cleric or religious, he became as he himself said, "thrilled in his soul".<sup>24</sup> Jacobinus told the story that on account of the hatred that he had against those who were of the faith and obedience of the holy Roman church, he (pretending to be a Catholic) went to John's hermitage. He had with him some nutshells, and he secretly placed these at the head of the beds of the brothers, moving them to discord, and causing them to argue amongst each other, saying: "You are not fasting, because you have eaten nuts." (It can be assumed with safety that the presence of the nutshells led some brothers to believe that other brothers had been eating surreptitiously.) Carrying out this type of practical joke, according to the witness Jacobinus, was something he was in the habit of doing.<sup>25</sup>

One day John summoned Jacobinus to his cell. Jacobinus was astonished and he asked himself: "What does this man want?" When he entered the cell, John began to tell Jacobinus the ways in which he believed evilly, and that he was in his faith a heretic, and that the father of Jacobinus believed evilly and was with the devil in the hell of the damned. Then John urged him repeatedly

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<sup>23</sup> *Et dixit dictus testis quod pater ejusdem testis fuit haereticus et mala persona, quod non credebat fidem sanctae Trinitatis et sanctae Romanae ecclesiae, et cum ista mala fide mortuus est, et dictus testis credit, in anima et corpore (ibidem, 828F).*

<sup>24</sup> *Unde aliquando dictus testis suasu dicti patris sui male credidit et Patarenius fuit, et in ista mala et pessima credulitate fuit dictus testis longo tempore, ita quod, ut ipse testis dixit, si ipse testis potuisset omnes clericos et religiosos minimo verbo suo destruere, laetanti animo fecisset (ibidem).*

<sup>25</sup> *Et dixit dictus testis quod propter odium quod ipse testis gerebat in illos qui erant in fide et obedientia sanctae Romanae ecclesiae ipse testis pluries ixit ad heremum in quo morabatur dictus frater Joannes Bonus; et habebat nuces sanas et ossa nucis, et ponebat eas ad caput lectorum fratrum latenter, ad hoc ut fratres venirent ad discordiam, et rixarentur inter se dicentes sibi ad invicem: Tu non jejunas, quia comedis nuces; et hoc, ut dixit dictus testis, fecit pluries (ibidem, 828F-829A).*

to return to penance and faith, but Jacobinus laughed at John and said: "Who are you to say that I believe evilly? I believe better than you do." At this point, a falcon, flying through the air, flew into John's cell and rested for a while on the hermit's feet, and from his feet jumped on to his knee. And then the witness wanted to catch the bird, but John said immediately to the bird: "Go with God", and the bird flew away. At which the witness was full of wonder, and could not keep from telling John immediately: "I want to believe from now on what you believe, because I see that your faith is better than mine."<sup>26</sup> From then on, he left his Patarene ways behind him, and believed that which he saw, and heard, from John.<sup>27</sup> Although it took a miracle indicating the holy man's powers over nature to seal the heretic's conversion, the stage clearly had been set by John's admonitions.

John's pastoral zeal extended beyond heretics, to the excommunicated as well, particularly the followers of Frederick II, who had been sent by the emperor to see John on account of his reputation for sanctity. The hermit refused to see them, saying:

You are excommunicated, and your lord is excommunicated and cursed; neither he nor you can be saved, unless you return to the wishes of holy mother church of Rome.<sup>28</sup>

But returning to the effects of John's preaching to sinners generally, there are three brief statements that merit attention. In one, it is said that:

on account of the many miracles, good words and health-giving things that John said to those who would come to him, ... many who earlier had been full of lewdness, and of worldly and carnal

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, 829A-B.

<sup>27</sup> *Et tunc dictus frater Joannes Bonus docuit eum sicut deberet credere articulos fidei, et sicut ecclesia Romana credit et tenet, et multa alia dixit ei. Ita quod per ea quae dictus testis audivit et vidit de dicto fratre Joanne Bono, rediit ad fidem sanctae Romanae ecclesiae et sanctae Trinitatis, quam tenet et servat hodie dictus testis, sicut quidam catholicus homo, licet se agnosceret peccatorem. Et dixit dictus testis quod ipse nollet esse in illa mala credulitate in qua hactenus fuit pro toto mundo, et de qua sive a qua dictus testis non recessisset, [et] primo permisisset se comburi, sicut faciunt Patareni, de quibus ipse erat unus ...* (*ibidem*, 829B)

<sup>28</sup> *Vos estis excommunicati, et dominus vester est excommunicatus et maledictus, nec ipse, nec vos salvari potestis, nisi rediveritis ad mandatum sanctae matris Romanae ecclesiae* (*ibidem*, 832E). Elsewhere in the canonization process (*ibidem*, 846D), it is reported that in a similar situation, John even declared that "*Potestatem non habetis judicandi*".

love, through the words and exhortations of John became adepts of some religious habit or of penitence.<sup>29</sup>

A second statement comes from the aforementioned soldier, Guido Moroello. After telling of sinners being converted by John to a religious state, he told of how he had two sons, both of them servants to a knight, who should that year have become knights themselves; but when he had prepared and arranged for everything, and had believed that they wanted to become knights, both took the habits of hermits, on account of the exhortations of brother John.<sup>30</sup> Finally, an eremitical confrere, brother Salveto, told of how he and several others, when they were lay people, more and more often went to the place where John lived, and would listen eagerly and gladly to the words of his preaching [*"verba praedicationis"*], and from that time onward this witness took on the hermit's habit himself on account of the words of his preaching.<sup>31</sup>

All of these statements to be found in the canonization process regarding John's asceticism and miracles, are in the company of many other declarations typical of Italian eremitical sanctity; but it must be noted that the witnesses whose testimony has been cited never once remark that John's preaching was unusual, surprising, or unsaintly. One can assume safely that these people clearly expected John to preach.

Then there is the case of Peter of the Morrone. Born in 1210, the eleventh of twelve children, Peter was educated in a monastery in his native region of Molise, in the heart of the Italian Apennines. As a youth he had many visions, and as a young man he began to

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<sup>29</sup> ... *propter multa miracula, bona verba et salutifera animae, quae dictus frater Joannes Bonus dicebat euntibus ad eum, qualiter deberent credere et observare mandata Dei, et observare et tenere, sicut observat et tenet sancta Romana ecclesia, multi qui male credebant conversi sunt ad fidem catholicam et obedientiam sanctae Romanae ecclesiae; et multi qui primo erant pleni omni lascivia et mundano et carnali amore, verbis et exhortationibus dicti fratris Joannis Boni adepti sunt aliquem habitum religionis vel poenitentiae (ibidem, 837A).*

<sup>30</sup> *Et dixit dictus testis, quod cum ipse olim haberet duos filios ambos domicellos, qui debebant illo anno cingulo militiae decorari, et cum dictus testis jam haberet eis omnia necessaria parata, et crederet eos velle fieri milites, ambo assumpserunt habitum heremitarum praedictorum exhortatione dicti fratris (ibidem, 834C).*

<sup>31</sup> ... *dixit quod cum esset adhuc in laicali habitu constitutus, ... dictus testis cum multis aliis ... propter bonam famam quam audiebat dictus testis de dicto fratre Joanne Bono, saepe et saepius accessit ad dictum locum, ubi dictus frater Joannes Bonus morabatur, et verba praedicationis suae cum aviditate, et libentissime audiebat, et sic tempore praecedente ipse testis per verba praedicationis ipsius sumsit habitum ejus per ipsum fratrem Joannem Bonum (ibidem, 772D-E).*

take up the eremitical life. In the 1240s he was persuaded to go to Rome and be ordained, but he immediately returned to his hermitage on Mount Morrone. Because of deforestation on the mountain, and to escape the crowds that would visit him, he went, along with some disciples, to a remote corner of a nearby mountain. There he established a monastery, and lived nearby in a hermitage. He soon fled the site, however, again due to its overcrowding by devotees. The pattern repeated itself for the next forty years, until he found himself back in his original hermitage on Mount Morrone. Aged eighty-four, he must have thought his years would end peacefully in the place he loved; so one can only imagine his shock when he was told by a group of visitors, including Charles II of Anjou and several cardinals, that he had been elected as pope, thus ending a two-and-a-half year interregnum.

The shock to his system paled, however, to the shock his papacy, under the name of Celestine V, had on the universal church, throwing its governance into such a shambles that he soon renounced the papal tiara, the only pope ever to do so voluntarily. On account of his abdication, and because Celestine was succeeded by Boniface VIII, many have assumed that Dante refers to Celestine when he mentions, while traveling through the first part of Hell, that he sees "he who through cowardice made the great refusal". The official church, however, thought differently, and canonized Peter in 1313, just seventeen years after his death. Significantly, he was canonized as Peter of the Morrone, not as Celestine V, demonstrating the moral and canonical legitimacy of the renunciation. Moreover, Peter was canonized as a confessor, indicating that his sanctity consisted, at least in part, in educating others in matters of faith.

In the canonization process, much is made of Peter's regular monastic habits.<sup>32</sup> He would rise during the night, recite the Psalms and litanies, and impose discipline upon himself. During the day, after Mass, he would recite the Psalter and canonical hours, and practice manual work such as writing or sewing or

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<sup>32</sup> An edition of this canonization process "*in partibus*" is available in Seppelt, Franz Xaver ed., *Monumenta Coelestiniana. Quellen zur Geschichte des Papstes Coelestin V.*, Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte [...] herausgegeben von der Görres-Gesellschaft 19 (Paderborn, 1921) 209–331. Citations will be to this edition [cited as "Seppelt"]. I am preparing an edition of the canonization dossier of Peter.

binding books. He would go into complete solitude for three Lents per year: the one leading to Easter, the one of Saint Peter (from the feast of Peter and Paul to the Assumption), and the one of Saint Martin (from the feast of Martin to Christmas).<sup>33</sup>

Yet, in the midst of this monastic and ascetic schedule, Peter clearly had the time to receive visitors. The fact is, he probably had no choice in the matter, as witnesses recount how they themselves would clear the snow in winter from the long, rocky and steep path leading to his cell, so that they would be able to visit him.<sup>34</sup> Precisely because he lived apart from the world, the world beat a path to his door, and insisted on the hermit being, essentially, a congenial host. His success as a crowd-puller was such that visitors had to revert to unusual means to see him. One story is told of a man who brought his young scabrous son to be cured by Peter, but could not get near him because of the throngs; so, the father simply lifted the boy up from the ass that had carried him up the mountain, and the crowd—apparently they had done this before—literally passed him along from person to person until reaching Peter, who obligingly cured the lad, who in turn was passed back down to his father.<sup>35</sup> Thus it is that Peter had to assure public audiences, and during these occasions Peter would minister to people's souls as well as their physical ailments.

There are several examples of Peter exhorting visitors to penitence, just as John used to do. One man, a local notary, was infamous for his dissolute life, but found time in his debauched schedule to go up and see Peter, at which the hermit preached to him [*"predicauit ei"*], and spoke much of the things of God, such that the notary was from that moment a changed man, and from that time until he died, the notary regularly fasted and prayed and abstained from many things, and became so devoted to God that,

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<sup>33</sup> For biographical studies of Peter, see Peter Herde, *Cölestin v. (1294) (Peter vom Morrone). Der Englepapst. Mit einem Urkundenanhang und Edition zweier Viten, Päpste und Papsttum 16* (Stuttgart, 1981); and Paolo Golinelli, *Il papa contadino. Celestino v e il suo tempo*, Storia & storie (Florence, 1996).

<sup>34</sup> ... *ipse multociens tempore yemali accessit cum aliis hominibus de Sulmona ad detegendam uiam per quam accedebatur ad eum que nonnumquam tegebatur a niue adeo quod uix recognosci poterat ipsa via* (Seppelt, 324).

<sup>35</sup> ... *propter multorum hominum copiam illuc stancium non potuit usque ad aspectum dicti fratris Petri sic portari, ut portatus fuerat usque tunc, sed eleuato de asino datus fuit super gentes illic stantes ipse testis, et gentes ipse alter alteri eum dabant donec peruenit ad cancellos ante altare ubi missam dictus frater Petrus dicebat ...* (Seppelt, 291).

frequenting churches day and night and doing many good works, people who knew him were awe-struck to see the change worked by the preaching of Peter.<sup>36</sup> Some visitors, before being cured miraculously of their ailments, confessed their sins to Peter;<sup>37</sup> others received alimentary advice: at least two people were warned not to eat meat on Saturdays.<sup>38</sup>

But there is a potential problem with this picture of Peter as hermit and spiritual advisor, and that has to do with women: Peter could not bear to be near them.<sup>39</sup> One woman, for example, who had been blind for three years, had to get some friends to approach Peter for a cure.<sup>40</sup> It was not simply women who could not get near Peter; one sick girl was not allowed to visit the hermit because the said girl was a female: "*dicta puella femina erat*".<sup>41</sup>

Peter's streak of apparent misogyny presents a pastoral problem: how does a priest minister to women if he will not let them near him? The answer: by celebrating Mass, at which time he would, of course, preach. One witness tells of how Peter deliberately chose

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<sup>36</sup> ... *et predicauit ei tunc et dixit sibi plura de diuinis uerbis, per que cum gratia Dei tantum operatus est, quod dictus notarius Iohannes ex illa hora mutatus est in uirum alterum et fuit postea usque ad mortem suam homo tante abstinence et tantorum ieiuniorum et orationum et sic deuotus Deo, frequentando ecclesias de die et de nocte et aliis operibus bonis ita intendens, quod omnes qui nouerant eum de ipso mirabantur, cum uidissent eum usque tunc fuisse dissolutum ualde in uita sua* (Seppelt, 227).

<sup>37</sup> See Seppelt, 284 and 288.

<sup>38</sup> See Seppelt, 295 and 322.

<sup>39</sup> To provide one example, Peter is quoted as saying, upon seeing that women had been led to his cell: *Quomodo duxistis huc mulieres? Scitis enim, quod in [istis] locis femine stare non debent* (Seppelt, 222).

<sup>40</sup> The woman, Trocta Benedicti of Castel di Sangro: *audiens miracula, que per dictum fratrem Petrum Deus cotidie faciebat, sicut publice audiebat, posuit fidem et deuotionem in eo et accedens cum alia multitudine gentium accedencium ad dictum fratrem Petrum pro deuotione quam habebant in eo [in manuscript, "eum"], applicuit ad locum heremiticum suum de Magella. Et rogatus dictus frater Petrus per notos ipsius testis, ut precaretur Deum pro ipsa simul cum alia gente, benedixit eam cum signo crucis. Qua benedictione per ipsam testem cum deuotione recepta statim uidere cepit ...* (Seppelt, 218).

<sup>41</sup> ... *tempore sue puericie passa fuit rupturam grauem et periculosam ualde in corpore scilicet in inguine et curari non poterat per medicos propter nimiam teneritudinem elatis et dictam rupturam passa fuit dicta puella bene per tres annos et nullum remedium salutiferum adhuc poterat inuenire ...* (Seppelt, 278). The witness, the mother of the ill child, asked a neighbor (who happened to be a doctor) to ask Peter to receive the girl; but *frater Petrus, quia dicta puella femina erat, non permisit eam ad se portari (ibidem)*. Peter cured the girl, but only by objects given by him to an intermediary. (The possibility should be noted that perhaps Peter judged the girl to be old enough to have periods; if so, then instead of his refusal to see her on account of her gender, it may be that he did not wish to be with a woman, however young she may have been).



open air sites for his masses so that he could be seen by people far away from him, and he would place himself so that he could best be heard by his audience. One woman of Sulmona, appropriately named "Sulmontina", told the story of how one day she went to the church of the Holy Spirit in Sulmona, where Peter would organize and solemnly celebrate a Mass. Among the great crowd of people which gathered in the church in order to hear the Mass, a woman possessed by the devil came in, and screamed out to the people in the church and to Peter, "Peter of the Morrone must free me". Peter completed the celebration of the Mass, and afterward blessed the crowd with the sign of the cross, after which she was perfectly normal.<sup>42</sup> Incidents such as this were very widely talked about, and ensured frequent liturgical contact between the hermit and his flock. Indeed, one witness, the notary Odo of Sulmona, testified that he had often seen Peter chanting the Mass and preaching to the people in his hermit's habit.<sup>43</sup>

In the processes of canonization, one encounters directly the voices of common people speaking about the holiness of John and of Peter. One hears of their frequent contact with these hermits, of the religious exhortations and instructions received from them, and of the preaching of these hermits. The evidence from canonization documents leads to a consideration, however brief, of the link between Italian hermit saints on the one hand, and Italian

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<sup>42</sup> *Item dixit, quod cum ipsa quadam die accessisset ad ecclesiam Sancti Spiritus de Sulmona ubi dictus frater Petrus debebat et disposuerat missam predicta die sollempniter celebrare, inter magnam gentium multitudinem que undique concurrerunt ad audiendam celebrationem eandem, quedam demoniaca ibidem interfuit et alta uoce clamabat coram predicta multitudine gentium et etiam fratre Petro predicto: "Petrucius de Murrone debet me liberare". Factaque celebratione predicta idem frater Petrus eandem multitudinem gentium crucis benedictione signauit et statim illa demoniaca ibi existens fuit illa hora ab eadem infirmitate totaliter liberata* (Seppelt, 250). In fact, Sulmontina reported that after Peter made the sign of the cross, the possessed woman not only had smoke come out of her, but she also vomited something looking like coal. It should be stressed that the possessed woman made reference to Peter as "Petrucius" (from the Italian "Pietruccio"); the suffix indicates at once a familiarity and a fondness for the person named.

<sup>43</sup> ... *ipse testis uidit dictum fratrem Petrum in loco de Murrone cantare missam et predicare populo in habitu heremitico* (Seppelt, 302). This phrase serves as the leitmotif of the rich article by Paolo Vian, "Predicare populo in habitu heremitico". Ascesi e contatto col mondo negli atti del processo di canonizzazione di Pietro del Morrone," in Walter Capezzali, ed., *Celestino v papa angelico. Atti del Convegno storico internazionale, L'Aquila, 26-27 agosto 1987, Convegni celestini-ani 2* (L'Aquila, 1988) 165-202. See also, in the same book, the article by Jacques Paul, "Célestin v dans la dévotion populaire," 203-32.

mendicants on the other. At first these types would seem radically different, but both the hermits and the early mendicants—especially the Franciscans—had in common a love of solitude, despite their frequent contacts with people. The hermits' love of solitude is obvious; yet Francis himself, for example, indicates that the fundamental break in his life, following his devotions to the leprous, led him to the following statement of his intentions and actions: "*exivi de saeculo*".<sup>44</sup> It was observed by many that his followers would, like their founder, retire from time to time, far from the maddening crowd. In a celebrated passage, Jacques de Vitry describes the early Franciscans' activities in this way:

By day they enter the cities and towns, such that they gain merit by their good works; and indeed by night they return to their hermitage or isolated place and give themselves to contemplation.<sup>45</sup>

Moving from the general to the specific, one finds Angelo Clareno saying, in the midst of his defense of the legitimacy of the Spiritual Franciscans, the following about Pope Celestine, who had legitimized the existence of the Spirituals:

Lord Celestine was by habit and name a monk, but in fact and by deed and in virtue a true evangelical pauper and by humility most truly a friar minor.<sup>46</sup>

So, in sources such as controversial literature and especially in canonization processes, one sees that contemporaries were fully aware of the active life of hermits, including their preaching

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<sup>44</sup> Francis of Assisi, *Testamentum* 1, 3, in Kajetan Esser ed., *Die Opuscula des hl. Franziskus von Assisi*, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 13 (Grottaferrata, 1976) 438. For treatments of this phrase in medieval spirituality, see Giuseppe Cremascoli, *Exire de saeculo. Esame di alcuni testi della spiritualità benedettina e francescana (secc. XIII–XIV)*, Quaderni di ricerche storiche sul primo movimento francescano ed il monachesimo benedettino 3 (Roma, 1982).

<sup>45</sup> *De die intrant civitates et villas, ut aliquos lucrifaciant operam dantes actione; nocte vero revertuntur ad heremum vel loca solitaria vacantes contemplationi*. R.B.C. Huygens, ed., *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry (1160/1170–1240) évêque de Saint-Jean-d'Acre* (Leiden, 1960) 75–6.

<sup>46</sup> *Dominus Celestinus erat habitu et nomine monachus, re vero et opere et virtute verus pauper evangelicus et humilitate verissimus frater minor*. See F. Ehrle's edition of Angelo Clareno's *Historia septem tribulationum ordinis minorum* in *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* 2 (1886) 126. On the relationship between Celestine and Franciscan spirituality, see Peter Herde, "Papst Cölestin und die franziskanische Spiritualität," in H. Mordek ed., *Aus Kirche und Reich. Studien zu Theologie, Politik und Recht im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Friedrich Kempf zu seinem funfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag und funfzigjährigen Doktorjubiläum* (Sigmaringen, 1983) 405–18.

activity; yet the *vitae* of these hermit saints, are almost totally silent in this regard.<sup>47</sup>

One further point (among many) must be stressed in relation to the material presented above. In neither of the canonization processes examined, despite their length and detail, does one find any mention of the most stereotypical—at least, to the modern reader—form of preaching: the delivery of a sermon within the context of a religious service. Despite this absence, testimony regarding both John and Peter are filled with explicit mentions, and implicit indications, of the act and content of their preaching. In the eyes of their contemporaries, John and Peter were in fact preaching when they admonished or taught those with whom they had contact. Although this appears to have little or nothing in common with the structure and content of a “typical” medieval sermon, one sees that in thirteenth-century Italy, at least, one did not need a sermon in order to preach.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere, I shall try to establish whether this is the case because of hagiographical topoi, which may have emphasized the traditional asceticism of hermit saints; with the institution of canonization, it may have become imperative to demonstrate that an essential element of being a confessor in thirteenth-century Italy was to have regular edifying and educative contact with one's neighbors. This may be one explanation as to why only hermits who belonged to religious communities were considered as serious candidates for canonization, whereas those who lived more completely apart from humanity were excluded from consideration of being examples of sanctity for the universal church.

<sup>48</sup> For the most complete study to date of the constitution and structure of a sermon in the middle ages, see Beverly Mayne Kienzle, “The Typology of the Medieval Sermon and Its Development in the Middle Ages: Report on Work in Progress,” in Jacqueline Hamesse and Xavier Hermand, eds., *De l'homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale. Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve (9–11 juillet 1992)*, Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales: Textes, Études, Congrès 14 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993) 83–101. My thanks go to the editor of the present volume, for reminding me not only of this fundamental work but also of much more.

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**PART FIVE**

**PREACHING BY AND AGAINST THE CATHARS**



## DEFENDING THE LORD'S VINEYARD: HILDEGARD OF BINGEN'S PREACHING AGAINST THE CATHARS

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The image of the vineyard serves as the point of departure and the nexus for this analysis of Hildegard of Bingen's (†1179) preaching against heresy.<sup>1</sup> Working in the vineyard, a key metaphor of biblical language, functions as a central metaphor and motif in medieval monastic language and thought. Indeed it provides a clear example of how agricultural imagery, when viewed in the context of the sociology of rhetoric, can function generally to cultivate and strengthen the ethos of a community.<sup>2</sup> Among the interpretations of the vineyard in medieval monastic literature are: the text; the individual soul; the community of a particular monastery; and also that of the realms beyond the monastery: the church and the world. The latter view of the vineyard as the church and the world frames this investigation of Hildegard's involvement against heresy. Furthermore, its ramifications in the twelfth century help to illuminate Hildegard's point of view in her preaching against the Cathars. Four extant texts—two letters, one treatise, and one *expositio* or homily targeted against the Cathars—are analyzed briefly here. A context is first provided for them that includes their historical setting as well as some parallels with two of Hildegard's contemporaries, Bernard of Clairvaux and Elisabeth of Schönau, who both employ the vineyard image to describe involvement in the church, in the world, and against heresy.

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<sup>1</sup> Material in this article on the four Hildegardian texts appeared in Beverly M. Kienzle, "*Operatrix in vinea Domini*: Hildegard's Preaching and Polemics against the Cathars," *Heresis* 26 (1996) 43–56, especially 26–7, and is reused here with permission of *Heresis*.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Burton Mack on agricultural imagery in Hellenistic culture and its influence on the New Testament: *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia, 1988) 159–60. I am grateful to Ronald Cameron for this reference.



Turning to the historical background of Hildegard's concern with the Cathars, we look first to the mid-twelfth century when reports intensified concerning dissidents whom scholars today recognize as part of the Cathar movement.<sup>3</sup> The church's campaign against them engaged the talents of two men whose correspondence from 1143 remains important for understanding both orthodox and heterodox views: Everwin of Steinfeld and Bernard of Clairvaux. Everwin described to Bernard what he saw as the alarming progress of a new heresy, clearly Catharism, and he urged his Cistercian colleague to intervene.<sup>4</sup> Bernard's response, contained in Sermons 65 and 66 on the Song of Songs, denounced the heretics and preceded his personal journey in 1145 to preach against heresy in the south of France.<sup>5</sup> One passage from Sermon 65 stands out for its elucidation of Bernard's awareness that he was expanding his role in the vineyard.

At the sermon's opening, Bernard of Clairvaux explains that he must preach a third sermon on Song of Songs 2:15: "Seize for us the little foxes that are destroying the vineyard." His first sermons warned his brothers how to guard against the three sorts of foxes who might ravage their vineyard, namely the vices that could lead them astray on their spiritual journey in the monastic life. However, the abbot expresses his anxiety about the security of the Lord's vineyard. Accordingly, he feels that he must turn from domestic monastic matters in order to be of use in affairs of general concern. Bernard states:

For I think that what I have done in the two sermons is adequate for our domestic vineyard, which you are, for protecting it against the snares of three sorts of foxes ... who are skilled and practiced at representing evil things under the appearance of the good. Truly the Lord's vineyard is not so [well protected]. I speak of that vineyard which has filled the earth, of which we too are part: an exceedingly great vineyard, planted by the Lord's hand, redeemed by his blood, watered by his word, increased by grace and fertilized by the Spirit. Therefore caring more for [our] particular property, I have been less useful to the universal [vineyard]. For its

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<sup>3</sup> See Anne Brenon, "Les hérésies de l'An Mil. Nouvelles perspectives sur les origines du catharisme," *Heresis* 24 (1995) 21-36.

<sup>4</sup> Anne Brenon, "La lettre d'Evervin de Steinfeld à Bernard de Clairvaux de 1143: Un document essentiel et méconnu," *Heresis* 25 (1995) 7-28.

<sup>5</sup> Beverly M. Kienzle, "Tending the Lord's Vineyard: Cistercians, Rhetoric and Heresy, 1143-1229, Part 1: Bernard of Clairvaux, the 1143 Sermons and the 1145 Preaching Mission," *Heresis* 25 (1995) 29-61.

sake I am troubled by the hoard of those demolishing it, the scarcity of its defenders, and the difficulty of its defense.<sup>6</sup>

This process of turning from inside to outside—from the domestic monastic vineyard to the Lord's vineyard—describes well monastic engagement in writing and preaching against heresy. We observe it next in the words of Elisabeth of Schönau urging Hildegard to play a role in saving the church from ruin.

Writing to Hildegard in 1163, Elisabeth of Schönau praises her sister as a worker in the Lord's vineyard, *operatrix in vinea [Domini]*, which was endangered by heresy and by the clergy's neglect. Elisabeth urged Hildegard to complete the Lord's work, because, she said:

The Lord searched for workers and found that they were lazy, because no one provided them direction.

Calling for Hildegard to take leadership, Elisabeth lamented:

The Lord's vineyard has no cultivator, the Lord's vineyard perishes, the church's head has grown weak (*languit*) and its limbs have died.<sup>7</sup>

Elisabeth's appeal to Hildegard was set in the context of schism and alarm over heresy. The emperor Frederick I, after Pope Alexander III's election in 1159, supported three anti-popes and was not reconciled with Alexander until 1177. In this atmosphere of disquiet, heresy came to public attention when about ten dissidents from Flanders, who had been hiding in a barn near Cologne, were brought into the city by neighbors. They were then interrogated at

<sup>6</sup> Translation is mine. The text is also translated in SoSS 3:179–80. [The *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* which appear in volumes 1 and 2 of SBO will be cited as SC, SBO.] SC, "Ser. 65," par.1, ll.5–15, SBO 2:172.: *Duos vobis super uno capitulo disputavi sermones; tertium in eodem paro, si audire non taedeat. Et necessarium reor. Nam quod ad nostram quidem spectat domesticam vineam, quae vos estis, satis me arbitror in duobus fecisse sermonibus pro munimento illi adversus insidias tripertiti generis vulpium ... gnari et assueti mala sub specie boni inducere. Verum dominicae vineae non ita. Illam loquor, quae implevit terram, cuius et nos portio sumus: vineam grandem nimis, Domini plantatam manu, emptam sanguine, rigatam verbo, propagatam gratia, secundatam Spiritu. Ergo plus proprii curam gerens, in commune minus profui. Movet me autem pro ipsa multitudo demolientium eam, defensantium paucitas, difficultas defensionis.*

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich W.E. Roth, ed., *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Aebte Ekbert und Emecho von Schönau* (Brünn, 1884) 74: *O domina Hildegardis perface opus domini, sicut usque nunc fecisti, quia posuit te dominus operatricem in vinea sua. Quesivit enim dominus operarios in vineam suam, et invenit eos omnes ociosos, quia nemo eos conduxit. Vineam domini non habet cultorem, vinea domini periit, caput ecclesie languit, et membra eius mortua sunt.*

a public assembly by Elisabeth's brother Ekbert, who was later to become abbot of Schöna. After refusing to accept the orthodox faith, the heretics were condemned and delivered to the lay authorities who sentenced them to death. Led outside the city, they threw themselves into the flames set for them.<sup>8</sup>

The concern surrounding the reappearance of heresy in the Rhineland in 1163 prompted the writing of a series of texts. According to Friedrich Roth,<sup>9</sup> Elisabeth wrote to Hildegard, inspiring a visionary treatise<sup>10</sup> that Hildegard sent to Elisabeth and later to the monks of St Martin at Mainz—this is the Mainz treatise that will be discussed below. Elisabeth then composed her own visionary text, the one containing the vineyard image we cited above, and she probably also influenced her brother Ekbert to compose his *Sermones contra Catharos*, which were completed sometime before Elisabeth's death on 18 June 1164.<sup>11</sup> In her treatise appealing to Hildegard, Elisabeth also called the learned clergy to study the

<sup>8</sup> Henri Maisonneuve, *Études sur les origines de l'Inquisition* (Paris, 1960) 111–2, dates the events as 2 August 1163 for the arrest of heretics and 5 August 1163 for their burning, and summarizes the episode and cites the relevant sources. The account from the *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, Monumenta Germania Historica, Script. 18, 114, is translated in R.I. Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (1975; reprint, Toronto, 1995) 88–9. That account mentions four men and one girl and states that the girl threw herself into the flames.

<sup>9</sup> Roth, ed., *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth*, 74; see note 7 above. Roth, p. xxxviii, discusses Merseberg, Domsbibliothek, Ms. Pergam. 4<sup>o</sup> Nr. 96, containing the “*Visio sororis Hildegardis contra Kataros*” (fol. 110r) which here is addressed to Elisabeth. According to Roth, Elisabeth wrote to Hildegard about the growth of Catharism in 1163; Hildegard answered her in turn; then Elisabeth wrote back to Hildegard. When Hildegard's text came to the attention of the Mainz clergy, they asked for a copy of it. I am grateful to Daniela Müller for pointing this out.

<sup>10</sup> The vision, dated in July of 1163, and its influence are discussed in Raoul Manselli, “Amicizia spirituale ed azione pastorale nella Germania del sec. XII: Ildegardis di Bingen, Elisabetta ed Ecberto di Schöna contro l'eresia catara,” in *Studi in onore di Alberto Pincherle*, Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni 38 (Rome, 1967) 304–6. L. Van Acker also accepts the 1163 date and the text is found in his edition, *Hildegardis Bingensis Epistolarium* II, CCCM 91a (Turnhout, 1993) “Ep. 169R,” 378–82 [henceforth, Hildegard of Bingen, “Ep. 169R”]; previous edition in J.-B. Pitra, ed., *Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis* vol. 8 of *Analecta Sacra* (Paris, 1882) 348–51. Although Maisonneuve dates the heretics' arrest 2 August 1163, we do not know when the first news of their discovery was spread. Perhaps it was in late July of that year, which would allow us to connect Hildegard's visionary treatise very closely with their arrest.

<sup>11</sup> Manselli, “Amicizia spirituale,” 302–13. On Elisabeth and Ekbert, see Anne Clark, *Elisabeth of Schöna: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia, 1992) 22–5; and “Repression or collaboration? the case of Elisabeth and Ekbert of Schöna,” in *Christendom and its Discontents: Exclusion, persecution, and rebellion, 1000–1500*, eds. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (Cambridge, 1996) 151–67.

New Testament and to find material there to combat heresy. Ekbert's sermons compile scriptural authorities suited to that task and conclude with excerpts from Augustine's *De Manichaeis*.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the 1163 visionary treatise Hildegard sent to Elisabeth and then to the religious of St Martin in Mainz, three other texts from Hildegard's works can be identified with her involvement against heresy and with the same environment of alarm that we have described: a sermon delivered in Cologne, requested by Philip, dean of the Cathedral, and sent in the form of a letter;<sup>13</sup> a sermon delivered at Kirchheim and sent in 1170 as a letter in response to Werner of Kirchheim;<sup>14</sup> and a homily on Luke 21:25-33, included in the collection of *Expositiones evangeliorum*.<sup>15</sup>

In all four texts, Hildegard expresses with bold apocalyptic language her sense of urgency about clerical corruption and the

<sup>12</sup> Ekbert's *Sermones contra Catharos*, including the excerpts from Augustine, are found in PL 195, 11-102. In the preface he states: *Ego itaque operae pretium duxi errores eorum describere, et adnotare auctoritates Scripturarum, ex quibus se defendunt, ac demonstrare quomodo sane intelligi debeant: simulque eas partes fidei nostrae, quibus se opponunt, proponere; et quibus Scripturae auctoritatibus, quibus vexationibus defendi possint, cum superno adiutorio demonstrare, ut qui ista legere et in memoria habere curaverint, aliquanto promptiores sint ad disceptandum cum illis, si quando, ut assolet, in populo fuerint deprehensi. Valde enim linguosi sunt, ac semper in promptu illis est quod adversum nos dicere possint. Et est non parva verecundia nostris, qui litteras sciunt, ut sint muti et elingues in conspectu illorum* (PL 195, 13-4).

<sup>13</sup> L. Van Acker, *Epistolarium* I, "Ep. 15R," CCCM 91 (Turnhout, 1991) 34-44 [henceforth Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R"], plus appendixes, 44-7; previous edition in PL 197, 244-53, "Ep. 48"; English translation in *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, I, trans. Joseph L. Baird and Radd K. Ehrman (New York and Oxford, 1994) 53-65, letters 15 and 15R. Daniela Müller has informed me that while it is highly probable that the heretics denounced in this letter are Cathars, it is also possible that Hildegard was arguing against the doctrines of John Scotus Eriugena, which were known especially in communities of nuns, as demonstrated by Christel Meier, "Eriugena im Nonnenkloster? Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Prophetentum und Werkgestalt in den *figmenta prophetica* Hildegards von Bingen," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 19 (1985) 466-97. The Cologne text is discussed by Elisabeth Gössman, "Der Brief Hildegards von Bingen an den Kölner Klerus zum Problem der Katharer," in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 20: *Die Kölner Universität im Mittelalter* (Berlin/New York, 1989) 312-20.

<sup>14</sup> Van Acker, ed., *Epistolarium* II, "Ep. 149R," in CCCM 91A (Turnhout, 1993) 333-7 [henceforth Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 149R"]; previous edition in PL 197, 269-71.

<sup>15</sup> "Homily 24.2," 312-3, see Pitra, ed., *Expositiones evangeliorum*, in *Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis, Analecta Sacra*, vol. 8, (Paris, 1882) 245-327 [henceforth Hildegard of Bingen, "Homily 24.2"]. Beverly M. Kienzle and Carolyn Muessig are preparing a critical edition based on the manuscripts Wiesbaden "Reisenkodex," Hess. Landesbibl. 2, fols. 434ra-461vb, 12th, and London, British Library. Add. 15102, fols. 146r-191r, 15th.

growth of heresy. While Hildegard describes the vineyard as the world in one of her homilies,<sup>16</sup> the language she employs to evoke the perils of clerical neglect and heretical expansion belongs to another mode of expression, the visionary and apocalyptic, removed from the everyday world of the vineyard. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton signals the increasing radicalization of Hildegard's apocalyptic ideology later in her life as her disgust with the established church intensified.<sup>17</sup> Kerby-Fulton also clarifies the phases of Hildegard's view of time; the heretics are not ushering in the end of the world itself, but a period that precedes it. Hence, the heretics that Hildegard presents as types of the false prophets (2 Tim. 3) are not the false prophets themselves but their forerunners. Consequently their appearance announces what Kerby-Fulton terms the "end of an era for the corrupt clergy", rather than the end of the world. Kerby-Fulton further observes that Hildegard uses the pseudo-prophets to fill a "symbolic slot in apocalyptic theology",<sup>18</sup> that is, a role that could be played by any group inspiring such a level of dread. One wonders how Hildegard's audiences received her apocalypticism. Indeed, today her language and the atmosphere it creates has a disquieting tone of violence; certainly she demonizes the heretics and associates heresy with pollution and threat to the social order, as do other polemical writings against heresy that I have analyzed elsewhere and that belong to the climate of persecution that R.I. Moore has identified in the twelfth century.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "Homily 10.1," *Dominica Septuagesimae*, Wiesbaden "Reisenkodex", Hess. Landesbibl. 2, fols. 444v-445r; in Homily 10.2, Hildegard interprets *vinea* as *fides*, fol. 445v; the same homily in London, British Library, Add. 15102 is found on fols. 163v-165r, and in Pitra, ed. *Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis*, 271-2.

<sup>17</sup> See Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism and Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, 1990) 27-31, and Charles Czarski, "The Prophecies of St. Hildegard of Bingen" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 1982) 123ff.

<sup>18</sup> Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, 39-40.

<sup>19</sup> R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford, 1987); and Kienzle, "Tending the Lord's Vineyard;" Kienzle, "*Operatrix in vinea Domini*;" Kienzle, "Henry of Clairvaux and the 1178 and 1181 Preaching Missions," *Heresis* 28 (1997) 29-61; Kienzle, "The Prostitute Preacher: Patterns of Polemic against Medieval Waldensian Women Preachers," in Beverly M. Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker eds., *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1998) 99-113; Kienzle, "Holiness and Obedience: Denouncement of Twelfth-Century Waldensian Lay Preaching," in *Festschrift for Jeffrey Burton Russell*, ed. Alberto Ferreiro (Leiden, 1998) 259-78. "Preaching as the Touchstone of Dissidence and Orthodoxy in the Middle Ages," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 43 (forthcoming, 1999).

*The Mainz treatise*<sup>20</sup>

In the case of the Mainz visionary treatise, dated in July of 1163, the monks at St Martin in Mainz specifically requested from Hildegard things that she had written about the errors of the Cathars.<sup>21</sup> In her text, Hildegard attributes the voice of the vision to the twenty-four elders seated around God's throne (Apoc. 4:4). They express the desire to shake the foundations of those who want to establish their own injustice in the place of justice. Here then, as we will see in the Cologne text, the heretics are connected with injustice.<sup>22</sup> A sequence of images follows: the ancient lion that must be constrained from attacking the woman who flees into the desert (the heavenly queen of Apoc. 12:1–6, often identified with the church); the black beast that breathes perversity through the winds; the ancient serpent that deceives the people; the ancient dragon that rises up against the holy ones.<sup>23</sup> This crescendo of negative associations characterizes the heretics. The holy ones then respond with an affirmation of God's creative power, and next Hildegard through the spirit warns people and nations to heed the serpent who sends those who are like the Sadducees and like worshippers of Baal.<sup>24</sup> She proceeds to accumulate more negative images, some evoking danger and others pollution. The heretics are likened to the crab and to scorpions.<sup>25</sup> Invaded by the devil, they are like great birds that throw away their own eggs, thus treating as poison what should be most dear to them.<sup>26</sup> This figurative way of describing the heretics' rejection of the faith clearly evokes a reversal of the natural order as these wicked birds turn away their eggs. Hildegard also attacks Cathar dualistic teachings

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<sup>20</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," 378–82. See note 10 for full bibliographical details.

<sup>21</sup> This letter is found in Acker, ed., "Ep. 169," in CCCM 91A, 377, see especially, ll.19–21.

<sup>22</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.5–12, 378.

<sup>23</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.13–34, 378–9.

<sup>24</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.61–72, 380.

<sup>25</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.73–76, 380–1. I am grateful to Barbara Newman for identifying this image as the crab, whereas I initially saw it as another reference to disease, as in 2 Tim. 2:17: "*Et sermo eorum ut cancer serpit*," frequently cited in polemical literature against heresy. One wonders if Hildegard interpreted the verse as a creeping crustacean rather than an advancing disease.

<sup>26</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.80–81, 381.

and docetism, asserting that they reject God's creation of all things and stating that they are worse than the Jews, presumably because they do not accept the full meaning of the Incarnation.<sup>27</sup> She returns to her images of terror, comparing the heretics to sulphurous fiery mountains, to the entrails of the most wicked beast. Hildegard then calls upon the people to cast out this "impure and unholy people", to "torture them with harsh and hard words", to expel them completely and to send them into their holes (like snakes).<sup>28</sup> The costs of not treating the heretics in such a way are high: condemnation by God, loss of recognition for teachers and priests, and for secular leaders: the destruction of cities and villages and the loss of lands.<sup>29</sup> Hildegard underscores the authority of her message with the assertion that in the same vision, a terrifying voice ordered her to write down these things so that the people might be kept from the tricks of the devil, which would otherwise take root among them, and so that these same people would not perish.<sup>30</sup> While Hildegard does not envision the death of the heretics, as she will in the Cologne sermon/letter, the framework for her message here implies destruction for those who do not expel heresy and heretics from their midst.

*Hildegard's public preaching and the Cologne sermon/letter*<sup>31</sup>

The longest text of the four has come down to us as a letter but is drawn from a public sermon delivered in Cologne, probably at the cathedral sometime in 1163 during the third of Hildegard's preaching tours. Hildegard undertook four such tours: the first between 1158 and 1161; the second in 1160 when she preached in the cathedral at Trier; the third between 1161 and 1163; and the fourth after her serious illness of 1167–70.<sup>32</sup> Hildegard's audiences

<sup>27</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.81–90, 381.

<sup>28</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.107–114, 382.

<sup>29</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.114–119, 382.

<sup>30</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 169R," ll.125–130, 382.

<sup>31</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," 34–44. See note 13 for full bibliographical details.

<sup>32</sup> Monika Klaes, ed., *Vita Hildegardis*, Liber 3, CCCM 126 (Turnhout, 1993) 17; Adelgundis Führkötter and James McGrath, trans., Mary Palmquist and John Kulas, eds., *The Life of Holy Hildegard* (Collegeville, Minn., 1995). See also Eduard Grönau, *Hildegard von Bingen 1098–1179, Prophetische Lehrerin der Kirche an der Schwelle und am Ende der Neuzeit* (Stein am Rhein, Switzerland,

were primarily monastic communities and she spoke in favor of monastic and clerical reform. Her hagiographer Theodoric of Echternach mentions twenty-one places where Hildegard preached (five cathedral cities and sixteen monasteries), noting that she preached to the clergy and people at Cologne, Trier, Metz, Würzburg, and Bamberg. Kirchheim is not mentioned, however, and the list is not exhaustive.<sup>33</sup>

The written text of the Cologne sermon was requested by Philip, dean of the cathedral chapter in that city, who wrote to Hildegard asking for a copy of the sermon she had recently preached there.<sup>34</sup> Philip's letter of request provides insight on the prophetic authority that Hildegard held. Philip calls her "a fragile vessel", but her words, clearly inspired by the Holy Spirit, are sought like "responses of truth" from "the very oracle of God". That the sermon was influential is attested by a 1220 reference to it from Gebeno, prior of Everbach. He wrote to Hildegard's daughters at their request about the heretics and cites Hildegard's letter to Cologne, referring to it while developing his own comments.<sup>35</sup>

The letter begins with Apoc. 1:4 to claim the authority of God's voice: "The one who was and is and is going to come."<sup>36</sup> Only the

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1985) 250–84; also discussed in Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* [2nd edition] (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1997) 11–2.

<sup>33</sup> See Sabina Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen, 1098–1179. A Visionary Life* (London/New York, 1989) 172–3. I am grateful to Barbara Newman for clarification here. See also the recent article by Régine Pernoud, "Die predigten Hildegards von Bingen," in *Tiefe des Gotteswissens – Schönheit der Sprachgestalt bei Hildegard von Bingen. Internationales Symposium in der Katholischen Akademie Rabanus Maurus, Wiesbaden-Naurod vom 9. bis 12. September 1994*, ed. Margot Schmidt (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1995) 181–92.

<sup>34</sup> For Philip's letter to Hildegard see, Acker, ed., "Ep. 15," in CCCM 91, 32–3. Baird and Ehrman, trans., *Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, letter 15, 53–4: *We want to inform you that after your recent visit to us at God's command when, through divine inspiration, you revealed the words of life to us, we were greatly astonished that God works through such a fragile vessel, such a fragile sex, to display the great marvels of His secrets. But 'the spirit breatheth where he will' (John 3:8). For since it is abundantly clear that the Spirit has chosen a dwelling pleasing to Himself in your heart, understandably we come to you in admiration as if to the living temple of God to offer up prayers, and we seek responses of truth from your heart, as if from the very oracle of God.*

<sup>35</sup> The Latin text of Gebeno's letter is in Pitra, ed., *Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis*, 486–7. I am grateful to Barbara Newman for clarification and a reference to Kathryn Kerby-Fulton's observation that Gebeno included the Cologne sermon and the letter to Werner of Kirchheim in his *Pentachronon*, a text that is extant in hundreds of manuscripts. Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, 28, 39.

<sup>36</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," l.1, 34. Barbara Newman has informed



last few sections of the letter deal with heresy. Hildegard portrays the devil plotting against the clergy and planning to send his emissaries to set ruin upon them. These "scorpions in their morals and snakes in their works" are the heretics who will appear with "wan faces", will wear black robes, be tonsured, and seem outwardly serene and peaceful. They will not love avarice, will not have money and will hold abstinence as a great virtue. Yet, the prophetess warns, the devil is within them, working "through the spirits of the air" and deceiving the heretics by permitting their desire to be chaste.<sup>37</sup> Hildegard observes that "they do not love women, but flee from them".<sup>38</sup> The abbess fears for women deceived and led into error by the heretics' chastity.<sup>39</sup> Again she associates the heretics with the devil, saying, "These are people of no faith, seduced by the devil";<sup>40</sup> and she warns the clergy that the heretics "will be the scourge to discipline you rigorously ...".<sup>41</sup> Hildegard clarifies the identity of the deceivers as the precursors of those who will come at the end of time and not those "who will come before the last great day when the devil has flown on high".<sup>42</sup> She predicts a violent end for the heretics:

[A]fter their perverse worship of Baal and their other depraved works are made known, princes and other great men will rush upon them, and will kill them like rabid wolves, wherever they can be found.<sup>43</sup>

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me that all of Hildegard's writings begin with some prophetic name for God in order to name God as the speaker. Hence Apoc. 1:4 is not the theme or the base text for the sermon.

<sup>37</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," ll.185–204, 40–1.

<sup>38</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," l.204, 41: ... *unde mulieres non amant, sed eas fugiunt*.

<sup>39</sup> Daniela Müller has pointed out to me that, on the one hand, Hildegard does not seem to take seriously the views held by women involved in Catharism while on the other, she does notice the strong influence that Catharism had on these women. This is discussed in Müller's book, *Frauen vor der Inquisition. Lebensform, Glaubenszeugnis und Aburteilung der deutschen und französischen Katharinnen*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Abteilung Abendländische Religionsgeschichte 166 (Mainz, 1996).

<sup>40</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," ll.248–249, 42: *Infideles autem homines isti, et a diabolo seducti* ...

<sup>41</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," l.249, 42: ... *scofa uestra erunt ad castigandum*.

<sup>42</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," ll.252–253, 42: ... *qui ante nouissimum diem uenturi sunt, cum diabolus in altum uoluerit*.

<sup>43</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," ll.255–258, 43: ... *postquam ipsi in peuersitatibus Baal et in aliis prauis operibus sic inuenti fuerint, principes et alii maiores in eos irruent et uelut rabidos lupos eos occident, ubicumque eos inuenerint*.

The vision of the heretics' death at the hands of the princes includes no denunciation of violence; on the contrary, it precedes the "dawn of justice" and thus has some redemptive value for the clergy who have been purged of their iniquities.<sup>44</sup> In this sermon/letter of Hildegard's, the heretics are clearly demonized and, furthermore, destroyed before order is re-established.

*The letter to Werner of Kirchheim*<sup>45</sup>

Werner of Kirchheim's letter to Hildegard asks for a copy of the words she interpreted for "us and many more" in Kirchheim,<sup>46</sup> referring to a public sermon delivered at Kirchheim and written against both clerical negligence and the Cathars.<sup>47</sup> The Kirchheim text casts the heretics in a role similar to that played in the Cologne sermon/letter. It opens with a vision of the beleaguered church whose first words are: "Foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven nests, [but the son of Man has no place to rest his head]" (Matt. 8:20).<sup>48</sup> After this dramatic vision of the church suffering from the clergy's corruption, Hildegard predicts that princes and a bold people (the heretics) will rise up against the clergy, denouncing their wayward living, reckoning their priestly office as nothing, and demanding that they be cast out from the church.<sup>49</sup> While the section of the Kirchheim letter devoted to the heretics echoes part of the Cologne sermon/letter's message, it is very brief and much milder in comparison. The image of the church serves as a stinging indictment of clerical neglect, but much less attention is given to heresy here.

<sup>44</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 15R," ll.248–261, 43. See Baird and Ehrman, *Letters of Hildegard*, 60.

<sup>45</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 149R," 333–7. For full bibliographical details see note 14.

<sup>46</sup> Acker, ed, "Ep. 169," ll.18–23, 332–3: *Adhuc unam vos petitionem petere presumimus, scilicet ut que uos, Spiritu Sancto docente, nobis et aliis quam plurimis in Kirchheim presentibus de negligentia sacerdotum quam in diuino sacrificio habent, aperuistis, materna pietate nobis scribere et transmittere non negligatis, ne a memoria nostra labantur, sed ut ea attentius pre oculis semper habeamus ...*

<sup>47</sup> Sabina Flanagan notes that Werner's letter gives the evidence for Hildegard's presence at Kirchheim. See Flanagan, *A Visionary Life*, 172; Newman, *Sister of Wisdom* 241–2, discusses the letter to Werner of Kirchheim.

<sup>48</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 149R," ll.18–19, 334.

<sup>49</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Ep. 149R," ll.71–76, 335–6. It is this passage that the Bollandists saw as a foreboding of the Protestant Reformation; see also Newman's commentary on the vision of Ecclesia, *Sister of Wisdom*, 241–2.

*Gospel homily 24.2<sup>50</sup>*

The fourth text, not previously studied within the context of Hildegard's writing against the Cathars, is the second of four *expositiones* or gospel homilies (number 24.2) on Luke 21:25–33:

And there will be signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations ... humans fainting with fear and foreboding of the things that are coming upon the entire world ...

Hildegard identifies the signs with the coming of heretics who challenge the humanity of the savior—a clear reference to Cathar docetism—and who will attempt to attack the church. Priests, teachers and spiritual people will turn away from the truth and error will spread, contaminating other peoples and provinces. The Antichrist will send his heretical ministers through the world; bishops and leaders will be shaken and will withdraw instead of openly defending the church and God's justice as they should. The faithful will suffer for Christ's sake and those who deny the Antichrist will recognize the true nature of Christ, as God and human.<sup>51</sup> After the tribulation of the saints, will come the fruit of good works, associated with justice, and the reward of eternal blessedness.<sup>52</sup> This is a less elaborate and less violent message than that of the three preceding texts against the Cathars, but the associations between heretics and Antichrist are nonetheless powerful.

*Summary and conclusion*

Four texts written by Hildegard and directed against Catharism have been examined: the Mainz treatise, the Cologne sermon/letter, the Kirchheim sermon/letter, and one gospel homily. At least three of the texts were disseminated beyond Hildegard's monastery and it is not unreasonable to assume that the fourth, the

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<sup>50</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Homily 24.2," 312–3. For full bibliographical details see note 15 above.

<sup>51</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Homily 24.2," 312: ... *ita ut fideles Antichristum abnegantes, ipsum verum Deum et hominem cognoscant.*

<sup>52</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, "Homily 24.2," 313: *Ita et vos, cum videritis haec fieri, scilicet martyrium et tribulationes sanctorum, et fructus bonorum operum, scitote quia prope est regnum Dei, videlicet praemium supernae beatitudinis.*

gospel homily, could have been circulated for reading aloud elsewhere. The two sermons/letters (Cologne and Kirchheim) both have ties to public preaching. The Mainz treatise and the Cologne sermon were circulated in written form: Elisabeth of Schönau was familiar with the Mainz vision and Gebeno of Everbach included both texts in his *Pentachronon*.

The texts issue from a climate of intense alarm over the growth of heresy; the sense of urgency and danger that was discernible twenty years earlier in the correspondence between Everwin of Steinfeld and Bernard of Clairvaux intensified in the 1160s when Hildegard and Elisabeth and Ekbert of Schönau joined the campaign. All four of the surviving Hildegardian texts reveal this pressing fear in their strong apocalyptic tone and context. While Hildegard's message was directed also at the clergy, this does not weaken the force of her remarks against heresy and the intensity of her feeling that heresy was a real threat and, in the words of her contemporaries, a menace to the Lord's vineyard.

These Hildegardian texts, particularly the two letters that convey material preached earlier, are significant also for their witness to monastic preaching by an abbess,<sup>53</sup> as well as to monastic preaching both outside the monastery and focused on the outside world, the external vineyard.<sup>54</sup> Monks of course were not authorized to preach in public unless expressly commissioned,<sup>55</sup> and Bernard

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<sup>53</sup> On women's preaching in the middle ages, see Kienzle and Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets*; Alcuin Blamires, "Women and Preaching in Medieval Orthodoxy, Heresy and Saints' Lives," *Viator* 26 (1995) 135–52. Blamires states that Innocent III was "scandalized to learn that Cistercian abbesses were presuming, among other things, to preach in public", 138. Blamires cites PL 216, 356, *De benedictione monialium et praedicatione vetita abbatissis*, where Innocent III in a letter to the bishops of Palencia and Burgos and to the abbot of Morimondo, condemns certain abbesses who "*moniales proprias benedicunt, ipsarumque confessiones criminalium audiunt, et legentes Evangelium praesumunt publice praedicare*". On the other hand, evidence from Admont, a double monastery in Austria, shows that abbesses were authorized to preach in the absence of a priest. See Stephan Borgehammar, "Who Wrote the Admont Sermon Corpus—Gottfried the Abbot, his Brother Irimbert, or the Nuns?," in *De l'homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale. Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve (9–11 juillet 1992)*, eds. Jacqueline Hamesse and Xavier Hermand, Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales: Textes, Études, Congrès 14 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993) 47–51.

<sup>54</sup> On the rarity of references to the outside world in preserved texts, see Beverly M. Kienzle, "The Twelfth-Century Monastic Sermon," in *The Sermon, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental* 77–78, ed. Beverly M. Kienzle (Turnhout, forthcoming).

<sup>55</sup> On the prohibition against monks' preaching, see Giles Constable,

himself describes a monk's desire to do so as a temptation: "a deceitful fox, evil disguised as good".<sup>56</sup> From years of Cistercian involvement against heresy, very few texts remain from which to ascertain the content or form of the sermons actually delivered during the preaching campaigns. From Bernard's engagement, we have polished sermons and letters, and reports narrated by other people.<sup>57</sup> The reports render brief accounts of what Bernard said and, while they allow for conjectures on content and form, they do not convey a full sermon text. Although Bernard's polished sermons or letters dealing with heresy might have been read aloud, thereby resembling sermons in their function, there is no evidence for a connection to a real preaching event as direct as that of Hildegard's two sermons/letters, requested after the sermons were delivered, then sent and preserved as letters. Hildegard's sermons/letters could have been and probably were revised when they were written in epistolary form, and thus one cannot conclude that they represent an actual record of what she preached. Nonetheless, they do have a more direct link to a real preaching event than Bernard's extant sermons and letters on heresy.

Can other comparisons be drawn between these two monumental workers in the vineyard? Both were among the leading ecclesiastical figures of the twelfth century who participated in the church's campaign against heresy. Hildegard was one of the rare women to be invited to preach publicly. Bernard was invited to do much more than that and he eventually drew a line on his engagement in the vineyard of the world, refusing to lead a crusade himself and perhaps regretting that he had preached one.<sup>58</sup> He remained opposed to the use of force against heretics,

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"The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries," *Traditio* 9 (1953) 213–79, 276–7. Constable explains that the right to preach was controlled by diocesan bishops and the pope. As greater numbers of monks entered holy orders in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, controversy over their preaching was heated and Gratian's *Decretum* includes the restriction under the heading "*Nullus monachus preter Domini sacerdotes audeat praedicare*" (*Corpus Iuris Canonici* I, Leipzig, 1879), Dictum post c. 19, C. 16, q. 1 (coll. 765–6). Constable cites R. Ladner, "L'Ordo Praedicatorum avant l'Ordre des Prêcheurs," in Pierre Mandonnet, *Saint Dominique* (Paris, 1937) 2:13, 25, 40, who indicates that in 1199 the Cistercian general chapter ruled against preaching the Fourth Crusade, and in 1212 they called back a monk from preaching the Albigensian Crusade.

<sup>56</sup> SC, "Ser. 64," par.3, ll.8–10, SBO 2:168.

<sup>57</sup> Kienzle, *Tending the Lord's Vineyard*, 39–61.

<sup>58</sup> Kienzle, *Tending the Lord's Vineyard*, 59–61.

although some of his successors showed no such reservations. To compare Hildegard and Bernard further, questions of influence style, gender, authority, and the interrelatedness of all of these can be posed. A brief reflection on some of those points follows.

Hildegard's works, as far as I know, do not provide us clear windows into her thoughts on fighting heresy as do Bernard's writings, although the thoughts of Elisabeth of Schönau, whose appeal Hildegard answered, are available. In the absence of direct statements from Hildegard about fighting heresy, the language of Bernard's and Hildegard's texts can serve as a point of entry into their comparison.

Hildegard's writing is very different from Bernard's: highly symbolic, flowing but also jumping abruptly from one image to the next, as the allegory is constructed.<sup>59</sup> Characters or objects appear suddenly, without explanation or introduction. As in other apocalyptic writing, typology is used to explain past, present, and future events, leading to what Kerby-Fulton calls a "blurring of distinctions between times, historical ages and places". Finally, from the prophetic literature of the Bible comes a quality described as "tense, aphoristic, [and] unreasoning". Taken together, these features produce a literature that seems more intuitive than logical.<sup>60</sup>

While some of Hildegard's techniques are common to monastic literature (symbolism, allegory, typology, word and image association) and ultimately derive from the Bible, there are clear differences between Hildegard's and Bernard's writings. Bernard's works have a sharper framework or superstructure within which the images are evoked and developed. He also devotes more space to the development of a logical argument, and we do not observe the sudden appearances of characters and objects or the abruptness and disjointedness of Hildegard's style. Barbara Newman also has noted the logical character of Bernard's imagery while Hildegard's is more intuitive.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Peter Dronke speaks of the "cascade of images" in Hildegard's lyrics in his *The Medieval Lyric*, 3rd ed. (London, 1996) 77. Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism* 57–8, characterizes Hildegard's use of allegory and vision, observing that her images are joined or fused in ways that surprise, and that there is a "tendency toward abrupt, disjointed movement between these fusions."

<sup>60</sup> Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism*, 57–8. For her discussion of typology, Kerby-Fulton cites the works of D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, 200 B.C. – A.D. 100* (London, 1964).

<sup>61</sup> Barbara Newman distinguishes differences in the style of the two authors when they employ multiple metaphors. For Bernard, she concludes

This difference in modes of expression is doubtless related to the source of authority claimed by the two writers. Hildegard's claim to authority lay in her gift of prophecy, which had received approval from Pope Eugene III in 1148 and acknowledgment from Bernard himself.<sup>62</sup> Hildegard's already prophetic voice was emboldened by the recognition she received, as is evidenced in the tone of her letters.<sup>63</sup> Her correspondents in the 1150s included the successors to Eugenius III: Anastasius IV (1153–54), Hadrian IV (1154–59), and Alexander III (1159–81).<sup>64</sup> We noted earlier the dean of Cologne Cathedral's acclamation of Hildegard's prophetic authority; certainly she was aware of it herself and Hildegard, like Elisabeth of Schönau, saw herself as filling a void left by the clergy's negligence.<sup>65</sup> The prophetic nature of Hildegard's authority grounded her writing and certainly influenced its style. Parallels have been drawn between Hildegard and later medieval women like Birgitta of Sweden who were described as prophets by themselves and others and who found an avenue and an audience for their expression in a primarily prophetic mode.<sup>66</sup>

Bernard, on the other hand, spoke as an abbot and a highly influential churchman. For his community, his authority as Christ's representative was grounded in the Rule of Benedict, casting him as the successor of the apostles in his role as teacher.<sup>67</sup>

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that the metaphors are "logically and grammatically discrete", not "mingled but juxtaposed", whereas Hildegard's images "mix freely and unself-consciously", linked grammatically but with a unity that is "intuitive rather than logical". Saint Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia. A Critical Edition of the Symphonie armonie celestium revelationum* (Ithaca/London, 1988) 40–2.

<sup>62</sup> The letters between Hildegard and Bernard and Hildegard and Pope Eugene III are translated and discussed in Baird and Ehrman, trans., *The Letters of Hildegard*, 27–33. The Latin texts of the letters between Hildegard and Bernard are included and dated in Van Acker, ed., "Ep. 1–2," in CCCM 91, 3–8; as are other letters between Hildegard and Eugene III, "Ep. 3–5," 8–13. Hildegard's letters are translated into German by Adelgundis Führkötter, *Briefwechsel*, 2nd ed. (Salzburg, 1990).

<sup>63</sup> See Baird and Ehrman, *Letters of Hildegard*, 27–33.

<sup>64</sup> See Acker, ed., "Ep. 8–10," in CCCM 91, 19–24.

<sup>65</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Claire Sahlin, "Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophecy: A Study of Gender and Religious Authority in the Later Middle Ages," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1996); and Kienzle and Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets*.

<sup>67</sup> *RB* 2:23, 175: *In his teaching the abbot should always observe the Apostle's recommendation: "Use argument, appeal, reproof,"* (2 Tim. 4:2). See also *SoSS* 2:211, where Bernard states: *I am neither prophet nor apostle, but I dare to say that I fulfill the role both of prophet and apostle*; Beverly M. Kienzle and J. Jarzembowski,

Furthermore, he was deeply concerned with the influence he held in his society, knowing that he belonged to the company of the learned who had the responsibility, as he described it, to set forth and refute the errors of heresy with plain reasoning.<sup>68</sup>

Elisabeth and Ekbert of Schönaue's words provide an interesting perspective for making a comparison between Bernard and Hildegard. Writing to her brother Ekbert, Elisabeth admonished the learned priests to provide the scriptural evidence for confounding heretics. She implicitly distinguished her visionary, prophetic mode of speech from the reasoned presentation she enjoined on her brother.<sup>69</sup> We may ask if the learned male clergy of this period had the option to express themselves in one or both of two avenues of expression, what we may call the reasoned and the visionary/apocalyptic, while their sisters found their authority and their mode of expression solely in the visionary/apocalyptic mode. Certainly there is evidence that male clergy recognized and respected prophecy as a different sort of gift and associated it with holy women. Ekbert, for example, sent his sister one of his visions and expressed the desire to inherit his sister's gift of prophecy. He also defended the role of holy women as prophets, citing Old Testament examples.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, texts from female visionaries were disseminated by male writers, as in the case of Gebeno of Everbach reported above; and in the later middle ages, there are clear references to male clerics preaching the revelations of Birgitta of Sweden in Swedish parish churches and in the cathedral of Naples.<sup>71</sup>

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trans., *Sermons for the Summer Season*, "Sixth Sunday After Pentecost, Sermon One," Cistercian Fathers Series 53 (Kalamazoo, 1991) 120.

<sup>68</sup> See Kienzle, "Tending the Lord's Vineyard."

<sup>69</sup> Speaking in the Lord's voice, Elisabeth calls the clergy to expel heresies with all their strength and destroy them with the Catholic faith: *Vos autem, qui litterati estis, scrutamini libros de novo testamento, et recordamini verborum eius, qualem fructum inveneritis. Renovamini spiritu sancto et refocillate animas vestras in edificationem ecclesie, que est sanctificata in Christo Iesu, et illuminata per sancta evangelia, et dealbata de antiqua rubigine.* Roth, *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth*, 76.

<sup>70</sup> Clark, "Elisabeth and Ekbert," 165. Ekbert, cited by Clark, note 4 wrote: *Sed cur in mentem non venit, quoniam simile factum est in diebus patrum nostrorum, quando viris socordie deditis, spiritu dei replete sunt mulieres sancte, ut prophetarent, populum dei strenue gubernarent, sive etiam de hostibus israel gloriose triumpharent, quemadmodum Olda, Deborah, Judith, Jahel et huiusmodi? (Visionem 40).*

<sup>71</sup> Claire Sahlin, "The Prophetess as Preacher: Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophecy," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 40 (1997) 29-44.



Looking specifically at writing against heresy and returning to possible comparisons between Bernard and Hildegard, Bernard's texts contain some apocalyptic elements, but these are certainly not his predominant mode of expression. Later in the century, however, apocalypticism is a prominent element of polemical texts written against heresy by such men as Henry of Clairvaux, Geoffrey of Auxerre, Alan of Lille, and Bernard of Fontcaude, even though they retain a structure of debate and a linear form of logic.<sup>72</sup>

Whatever the style of expression, Hildegard's apocalyptic visions or Bernard's resounding refutations, their analysis contributes to understanding the depth of fear experienced by these major ecclesiastical figures seen as workers in the Lord's vineyard, defending it in the face of expanding heresy, particularly that of Catharism. It is probably impossible to assess the degree of influence that Bernard's controlled rhetoric or Hildegard's effusive visionary writing had on the actions of their contemporaries in the vineyard of the world. It is clear that they both felt that the vineyard of the church and by extension that of the world were seriously threatened. Sadly, after Bernard, some churchmen put aside his reservations about violence, urging the secular forces to eliminate heresy with the sword, and the horrific vision related in Hildegard's Cologne sermon/letter, with heretics dying like rabid wolves at the hands of princes, corresponds to the historical reality of the Albigensian Crusade.

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<sup>72</sup> Kienzle, "Holiness and Obedience;" Kienzle, "Henry of Clairvaux and the 1178 and 1181 Preaching Missions."

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## THE PREACHING OF THE CATHARS

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### *Introduction*

This article might be seen, within the context of this collection, as representing “the opposition”. Using the evidence of inquisitorial registers, what follows examines the practice and context of preaching by the Cathar *perfecti* of southern France in the thirteenth century, and presents for analysis four inter-linked sermons given by one *perfectus* in the early fourteenth century. In both halves of the paper, the intention is to begin to question what we might understand to be denoted by the term “preaching”. My initial assumption, when approaching this topic, was that I could do no more than gloss the existing literature on Cathar preaching. Surprisingly, this has not been the case: the context and practice of Cathar preaching has not been examined thus far in any great detail.<sup>1</sup> It has, in fact, somehow disappeared from view by virtue of its centrality. That the Cathars were preachers is well known; that they preached against the orthodox church in favor of their own dualist religion is similarly familiar. But a closer study—who gave sermons, who listened to them, where and when they occurred—has not been approached to date. Cathar preaching might be viewed as a heretical form of monastic preaching, both in the sermons delivered to other members of the sect, and to those given to lay people.<sup>2</sup> The import of this point is to note that an analysis of heretical preaching within its social context might further our understanding of the practices of orthodox preaching.

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<sup>1</sup> All the works on heresy cited below mention Cathar preaching to some degree, but few examine it in depth; Duvernoy, for example, dedicates three pages to it from his lengthy two-volume study, Jean Duvernoy, *La religion des Cathares* (Toulouse, 1976) and *L'histoire des Cathares* (Toulouse, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> Anne Brenon has suggested that one can view the entrance into the Cathar *perfecti* as involving “vows of a monastic character”. See Anne Brenon, “Les fonctions sacramentelles du consolament,” *Heresis* 20 (1993) 33–50, 37.

The background to Catharism—the debt it owed to the wandering preachers of the twelfth century, the negative inspiration it provided the mendicant orders of the thirteenth century—makes preaching appear as an obviously essential part of the life of the sect.<sup>3</sup> This has, at times, lead to certain assumptions: that the Cathars were practically an order of preachers in themselves; that they were “popular” preachers, working out-of-doors and on the move, until persecution forced them into hiding; and that preaching was the essential method of drawing people into the sect.<sup>4</sup> Preaching has also become subsumed within the more widely researched area of Cathar theology. Here, the major presupposition has been that Cathar theology and Cathar preaching were largely synonymous. This becomes most apparent when writers extract theological material from the inquisition depositions, and assume that the information reported constituted preaching, or the memory of preaching.<sup>5</sup> These views are not necessarily incorrect, but they need further examination; this article aims to begin that process.

The analysis that follows is based upon inquisitorial registers from southern France, recording the depositions of about 230 witnesses, given between the 1230s and the 1280s.<sup>6</sup> As the great Cathar

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan (Notre Dame, 1995) particularly 11, 45; A. Borst, *Les cathares*, trans. Ch. Roy (1953; Paris, 1984) particularly 172ff; Malcolm D. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy. Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1992) particularly 55–61.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française au moyen âge, spécialement au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, d'après les manuscrits contemporains* (Paris, 1868) 215; Jean Guiraud, *L'histoire de l'Inquisition au moyen âge*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1935 and 1938) 1:152ff; Borst, *Les cathares*, 169; Elie Griffe, *Le Languedoc cathare de 1190 à 1210* (Paris, 1971) 52–8; Anne Brenon, *Le vrai visage du catharisme* (Portet-sur-Garonne, 1989) 23; Jean Duvernoy, *La religion*, 217–9.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Raoul Manselli, “Evangelisme et myth dans la foi cathare,” *Heresis* 5 (1985) 9–17; Anne Brenon, “Bons chrétiens et hérétiques,” *Heresis* 13–14 (1990) 118–55.

<sup>6</sup> Registers of the inquisitors Bernard de Caux and Jean de St-Pierre; Brother Ferrier; Ranulph de Plassac and Pons de Parnac; Jean Galand and Guillaume de St-Seine [Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds Doat, vols. 22–26; henceforth, D22–26]. For more details, see Jean Duvernoy, *L'histoire*, 353–4. The second half of this article makes use of the inquisition registers of Bishop Jacques Fournier (later Pope Benedict XII). These are available edited in Jean Duvernoy, ed., *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier, évêque de Pamiers (1318–1325)*, 3 vols (Toulouse, 1965), henceforth, *Fournier* I, II or III, and translated into modern French in Jean Duvernoy, ed. and trans., *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier (évêque de Pamiers), 1318–1325*, 3 vols (Paris, 1978), henceforth, *Registre* I, II or III.

historian Yves Dossat has noted, the earlier records tell us that Cathar preaching occurred, but there is little "positive" information as to the content of that preaching.<sup>7</sup> In the 1230s and 1240s, the inquisitors' questions that one can detect were extremely formulaic: "had the witness ever heard errors against God, the Host, baptism or marriage?"; "had the witness ever attended the sermons of the heretics?"; "had the witness ever heard the words or admonitions of the heretics?"<sup>8</sup> These questions did not lead to further examination, but were ends in themselves. Unauthorized preaching, following the Statutes of Paris (1204) and the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), was a crime in itself;<sup>9</sup> to have contact with heretics, or to "hear their words and admonitions", was similarly transgressive. For the earliest inquisitors, operating in the immediate aftermath of the Albigensian Crusade, the nuances of reply that would now interest historians were of no importance. An early record of inquisitorial sentences provides a great deal of evidence for the high occurrence of preaching, but gives almost no detail whatsoever, and I have therefore excluded it from my analysis as impossible to quantify.<sup>10</sup> At the other end of the scale, in the Fournier registers, we are supplied with a wealth of material.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Yves Dossat, "Les cathares d'après les documents de l'Inquisition," in *Cathares en Languedoc*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 3 (Toulouse, 1968) 71–104, at 87.

<sup>8</sup> For example, D22 64v; D23 156r, and *passim*; see also my comments below on the evidence in ms. Doat 22.

<sup>9</sup> *Statutes of Paris* (1204), chapter 92 in, Odette Pontal, *Les statuts de Paris et le synodal de l'ouest*, Les statuts synodaux Français du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle 1 (Paris, 1971) 86–7; Lateran IV (1215), chapters 3 and 10 in J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (1758–1798; 1903–1927; rpt. Graz, 1961) volume 22, cols. 986–990, 998–1000; the Statutes of Raymond, Count of Toulouse (1233) specify that any house where heretics were present, lived, were buried, or preached, should be destroyed (see Mansi, *Sacrorum*, v.22, col.265). On legislation against unauthorized preaching see, amongst others, Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française*, 22; Jean Longère, "La prédication et l'instruction des fidèles selon les conciles et les statuts synodaux depuis l'antiquité tardive jusqu'au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *L'encadrement religieux des fidèles au moyen âge et jusqu'au Concile de Trente: la paroisse, le clergé, la pastorale, la dévotion*, Actes du 109<sup>e</sup> congrès national des sociétés savantes, Dijon 1984 (Paris, 1985) 391–418.

<sup>10</sup> Recorded in ms. Doat 21. For example, the following items: *Na Franca de Rigout vidit hereticos et audivit predicationem eorum. Item alibi vidit hereticos et audivit predicationem eorum. Item alia vice vidit hereticos et audivit predicationem eorum. Item alibi vidit hereticos et audivit predicationem eorum et adoravit eos. Item alibi vidit hereticos et audivit predicationem eorum* [D21 299r]. I have also excluded from my count the evidence contained in Toulouse, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 609, the basis for Abels and Harrison's article mentioned below.

<sup>11</sup> One should also note that inquisitors increasingly supplied a large amount of information about Cathar theology in their own questions, a fact

However, this evidence from the early fourteenth century cannot simply be transposed backwards over a century; it may be suggestive, but it cannot easily fill in the blanks. The Catharism of the early fourteenth century was a small affair, almost a family business, led by the *perfectus* Pierre Autier. There were only fourteen *perfecti* in Languedoc by that stage, and the context for their faith was very different from the years before the Albigensian Crusade, when the nobility of Languedoc were openly in support of Catharism; and the context was indeed very different from the middle of the thirteenth century, when the Cathars, although under threat, still held strongholds such as the *castrum* of Montségur, and could reasonably expect a fair degree of support from the general populace.<sup>12</sup> My research in the first half of this piece is, then, limited to information drawn from the bulk of inquisitorial material in the central part of the thirteenth century.

All of this is not to say, however, that Cathar preaching has been completely ignored in its own right. There are certain details that we already know: for example, as Peter Biller has recently shown, books figure quite largely in Cathar preaching. Sometimes the sources tell us that the book was the New Testament, or simply the gospel of John.<sup>13</sup> On a number of occasions a literate minion read from the book, and the Cathar *perfectus* elaborated on the theme: for example, in 1227, a Cathar deacon called Arnaud Huc preached in the house of a Cathar supporter in Sorèze; the witness to this event recalled that a clerk called Adam Raynald "was reading in the book of the heretics, and the said Arnaud Huc was expounding and reading likewise, and speaking about the fatted calf".<sup>14</sup> Similarly in 1235 a witness called Pierre de Saint-Michel recalled that a public notary read "the Passion of the Lord" and the heretic

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that only becomes obvious when the deponent made a negative reply to the enquiry. See, for example, questions apparent in the deposition of Jean Maury (*Fournier* II, 488ff; *Registre* III, 888ff.).

<sup>12</sup> On Catharism in this period, see the famous Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou; Cathars and Catholics in a French Village 1294-1324*, trans. Barbara Bray (London, 1980), *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324* (Paris, 1975); for other, more nuanced views, see Elie Griffe, *Le Languedoc cathare et l'Inquisition, 1229-1329* (Paris, 1980) 270-99; Jean Duvernoy, "Le catharisme en Languedoc au début du xive siècle," in *Effacement du Catharisme (xiii<sup>e</sup>-xiv<sup>e</sup> siècles)?*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 20 (Toulouse, 1985) 27-56.

<sup>13</sup> On Cathar use of the Bible, see Christine Thouzellier, "La Bible des cathares languedociens et son usage dans la controverse au début du xiii<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Cathares en Languedoc*, 42-58.

<sup>14</sup> D25 269v.

Guillaume Vital "expounded" upon it.<sup>15</sup> The fourteenth-century Cathars were also literate, Pierre Autier himself having originally trained as a notary: on one occasion, for instance, Pierre's son Jacques read from a book in Latin, whilst his father expounded in the vernacular.<sup>16</sup>

What I present below is based upon a count of the "items" (the Latin word usually used to prefix each new piece of information) of preaching presented by the inquisitorial witnesses. Although my findings are represented at times as proportions or percentages, this is only intended to communicate broad trends, and should not be taken as quantifiable statistics. Because of the problems of the sources, one cannot ever present statistical "facts"; in addition to the complications of inquisition registers discussed above, there is the further problem that any one item may refer to a number of events. For example, one frequently finds deponents who confess to having seen heretics preaching, and list those present at the sermon, only then to indicate that this was not one event but something that took place over a number of years. At other times witnesses simply say that a Cathar preached "frequently" or "often"; or deponents are vague about the time, the place, and who was present. It has also proved impossible to cross-reference authoritatively items to establish which deponents are reporting the same event. Consequently, what is presented below is the *representation* of Cathar preaching through witnesses' statements. In addition, the evidence also shows how much Cathar theology was transmitted not through formal preaching but through discussion, conversation and argument, or simply through family tradition.<sup>17</sup> Drawing a line around what actually constitutes "preaching" is surprisingly difficult; this article also aims to suggest that we might want to look further at both the context and the "idea" of

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<sup>15</sup> D23 89r. For other references see Peter Biller, "The Cathars of Languedoc and Written Materials," in *Heresy and Literacy 1000-1500*, eds. Peter Biller and Anne Hudson (Cambridge, 1994) 61-83; Dossat, "Les cathares," 88; Guiraud, *L'histoire*, 1:152-5.

<sup>16</sup> *Fournier* II, 406-7; *Registre* II, 569-70. Other occasions do not make clear whether the books were in Latin or the vernacular: see for example *Fournier* I, 315, 341; *Fournier* II, 10.

<sup>17</sup> On informal discussions between laity, see for example the deposition of Arnaud Sicre, discussed below [*Fournier* II, 20-81; *Registre* III, 751-801]. On the importance of the family, see M. Roquebert, "Le catharisme comme tradition dans la <<familia>> languedocienne," in *Effacement du Catharisme?*, 221-42.



preaching, within both heresy and orthodoxy. One is dealing, then, with a representation of Cathar practice, rather than a hard and fast reality.

*Cathars preaching: contexts, people, and numbers*

With these provisos, the records show 301 items mentioning Cathar preaching. As far as one can date the events, they span the years 1194 to 1287. Unsurprisingly, we find a certain number of items from the furthest reaches of witnesses' memories in the early thirteenth century; then a falling-off during the early years of the Albigensian Crusade; then a strong return from the mid-1230s to 1244; then another and permanent drop after the fall of the Cathar stronghold of Montségur in that year (*Figure 1*). It must be noted that it is not necessarily correct to imagine a real increase in preaching between the beginning of the century and the 1230s and early 1240s; the lack of items in the earlier years may have more to do with the age and memory of the witnesses interviewed. Other evidence, such as chronicles, would indeed suggest that Cathar preaching was very active in the early years of the century.<sup>18</sup>

*The preachers*

One-hundred-and-fifteen different Cathar *perfecti* were named in the items recording preaching.<sup>19</sup> Only two of them were women, Arnaude de Lamothe and Esclarmonde de Bessac; this does not surprise, as Abels and Harrison's 1979 article on the participation of women in Catharism had already suggested from earlier inquisitorial records that women very rarely preached.<sup>20</sup> Two unnamed

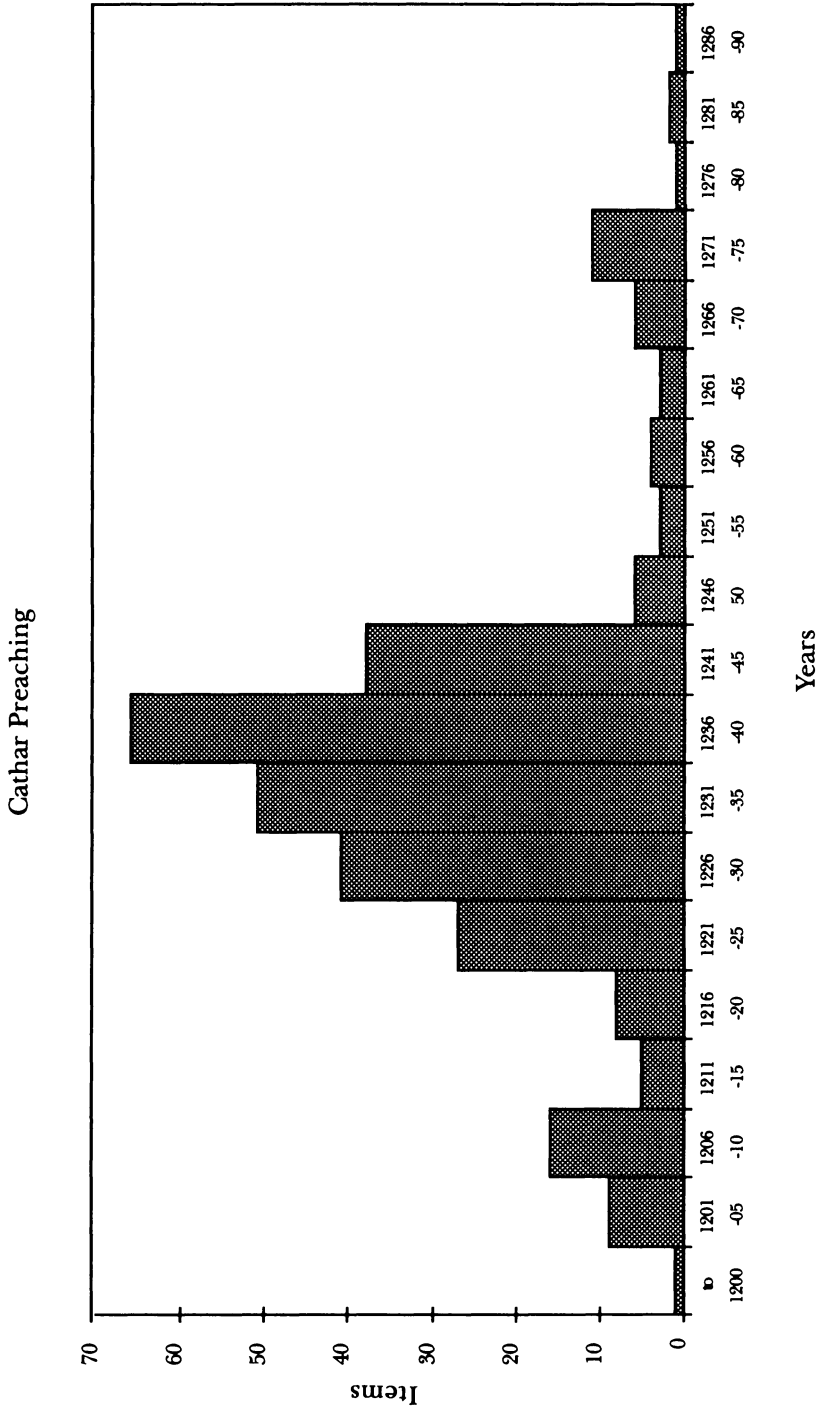
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<sup>18</sup> Guillaume Pelhisson, *Chronique*, ed. and trans. Jean Duvernoy (Paris, 1994); see also documents edited and translated in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, eds. and trans. W.L. Wakefield and A.P. Evans (New York, 1969).

<sup>19</sup> Note that some items do not name the *perfecti* preaching.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison, "The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism," *Mediaeval Studies* 41 (1979) 215–51, see particularly 227–8. They find only eleven named *perfectae*, and point out that Arnaude de Lamothe preached very rarely.

Figure 1



*perfectae* are also mentioned,<sup>21</sup> and there is one other possible contender: a witness recalled hearing around 1270 a friend called Esclarmonde Llobet of Cordes saying "that she would never want to eat or drink if she heard Lady Guillelme, wife of Bertrand Roca, preaching".<sup>22</sup> One *might* assume that Lady Guillelme was a Cathar, but whether Esclarmonde was referring to something that had happened, or something she wished would happen, one cannot tell.

More firmly shown, however, is this: many of those who preached, who did the vast majority of the preaching, were not simply *perfecti*, but were deacons or bishops in the Cathar church. Forty-two of the one-hundred-and-fifteen people held office in this way, about thirty-seven percent of those named.<sup>23</sup> And they account for at least one-hundred-and-ninety-one of the three-hundred-and-one items mentioned by witnesses, which translates to sixty-three percent. One bishop in particular, Bertrand Marty, accounts for forty-eight of the items. In fact, this picture needs further consideration, since after 1244, when the heretical stronghold of Montségur was taken by the French, the hierarchical Cathar church practically ceased to exist, and few deacons or bishops were appointed.<sup>24</sup> The graph (*Figure 1*) illustrates a small revival of preaching in the 1270s; this was largely due to two particular *perfecti*, Guillaume Prunel and Bernard de Tilhol, neither of whom were a deacon or bishop. If one stops the count at 1244, we find that the preaching performed by deacons and bishops jumps to around seventy percent of the items.<sup>25</sup> In the first half of the thirteenth century, then, the majority of Cathar preaching, with some interesting exceptions, was carried out by the church hierarchy.<sup>26</sup> We should remember that preaching was far from the

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<sup>21</sup> D23 2v; these two are mentioned by Arnaude de Lamothe, as the first contact she had with Catharism.

<sup>22</sup> D25 57r.

<sup>23</sup> Not every person is specifically identified in each item as a member of the hierarchy, and there are sometimes problems with trying to pinpoint the date of each item; consequently I have relied upon cross-referencing within the records, and with the sections in Borst and Guiraud mentioned below, to identify all those who were bishops, deacons or so on at some point.

<sup>24</sup> See Borst, *Les cathares*, 197–200; Duvernoy, *L'histoire*, 347–51. For discussion, see Borst, *Les cathares*, 116 and *passim*.

<sup>25</sup> Note that this figure might in fact be higher, as some items of preaching, particularly those at Montségur where Bertrand Marty was active, are not ascribed to a named *perfectus*.

<sup>26</sup> Lambert notes that preaching was "more commonly a duty of those who

only task carried out by the Cathars, and it would be instructive to examine the incidence of other formal rituals, to see if the known gender imbalance is matched by a similar bias towards the Cathar hierarchy. But we can see that the Cathars were not as demotic or "popular" as one might imagine. Anne Brenon has described the Cathars as "professional preachers", in order to emphasize their grasp of scriptural learning;<sup>27</sup> one might suggest that it would be better to say that there were "professional preachers" *amongst* the Cathars, at least up until the fragmentation of the Cathar church in the late 1240s. Certainly preaching was not limited to this subgroup within the sect, but neither were all Cathar *perfecti* regularly producing sermons. In 1232 the major Cathars went to Montségur to petition for protection from its lord; a witness recalls them saying that,

in the said *castrum* the church of the heretics could have its home [*domicilius*] and capital [*capitus*] and from there could transmit and defend its preachers [*praedicatores*].<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps this should be understood in the sense of sending forth one particular group within the sect.<sup>29</sup>

### *The audience*

It is important to remember that on occasions the *perfecti* preached to other Cathar *perfecti*, sometimes apparently as the main basis of the audience, and sometimes simply amongst the audience. For example, one deponent reported hearing the Cathar bishop Guiraud Abit preach at Cabaret, on Christmas Day 1228, to

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held office in the sect" (see *Medieval Heresy*, 118), whereas Duvernoy has been keen to stress its practice outside the sect's hierarchy (see *La religion*, 219). Both views are correct, but the former carries more weight, particularly in the first half of the thirteenth century.

<sup>27</sup> Brenon, "Bons chrétiens," 140.

<sup>28</sup> D24 44r.

<sup>29</sup> On two occasions, the heretic Guillaume Cambraire is described as having "come from Montségur" to Avignonet to preach [D25 331r, 331v]. Given the time (1235) and similarity in name, this might well be the "Older Son" Jean Cambiaire who was amongst the party who petitioned Raymond of Péreille to let the Cathars use Montségur as their base. See Duvernoy, *L'histoire*, 272, 348.

many *heretici et hereticae* and many men of the *castrum*, to the extent that all of the house was full.<sup>30</sup>

But what of the lay audience? This is more problematic, and one cannot supply a complete answer. In the first place, there are large gaps in our knowledge: frequently a witness lists some people and then says "and many more" or "and others unremembered". At other points a witness provides a long list of those who were present at heretical preaching, but is describing a continuous situation rather than a specific event,<sup>31</sup> or simply makes it plain that preaching occurred "often".<sup>32</sup> Preaching at Montségur is particularly problematical, since heretical activity there would appear to have gone on most of the time, and a large number of people moved in and out of the *castrum*, making it difficult to pinpoint specific events. When particular events can be identified, the audience often numbered ten or less.<sup>33</sup> Given these *a priori* problems I have not attempted to cross-reference every person and event, so once again these figures must be taken as impressionistic. One-hundred-and-fifty-four of the three-hundred-and-one items talk of groups of ten people or less listening to Cathar preaching; that is, about half.<sup>34</sup> If one were to add all of the unspecified items from Montségur, this would rise to about sixty percent. In addition, eighty-two of the three-hundred-and-one items show audiences of five or less. There are some large congregations: for example, in 1204 Bernard Fresel preached to "all the women and knights of Auriac";<sup>35</sup> in 1243, the bishop Bertrand Marty preached to a group of thirty-four people at Montségur on Christmas Day;<sup>36</sup> and there was the "full house" present at Geraud Abit's preaching, mentioned above.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, one is frequently dealing with small, and fairly intimate, congregations. These groups are, particularly

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<sup>30</sup> D23 227r/v; for some other examples of *perfecti* in the audience, see D23 91r/v, 108r, 314v; D24 119r/v, 241v; D25 269r.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, D24 75v–77v, where 131 names are given.

<sup>32</sup> For example, D24 56r/v and *passim*.

<sup>33</sup> D22 269v–270r, 279r/v, 281r. The numbers present on these occasions were nine named plus others, eight, and five respectively.

<sup>34</sup> This rough figure is preserved if one limits the enquiry to 1221–1245 (the most active period of preaching).

<sup>35</sup> D24 37v.

<sup>36</sup> D24 175v–176r.

<sup>37</sup> For other large groups, see D22 2v, 43r, 44v, 75r, 76r, 87r/v, 177v; D23 5v, 58v, 71r, 80r, 80v–81r, 84r/v, 89v, 100v, 108r, 122v, 125r/v, 165v, 176v, 306v, 314v, 346r; D24 31r, 32v, 37v, 46r, 84v, 127r, 146r; D25 261v, 269r, 331v; D26 29v–30r.

in the later period after the Albigensian Crusade, often made up of family members or members of the *domus*, the Languedocian household.

When thinking about this context, we might question what exactly we understand by the term "preaching". There were a variety of ways in which the laity had come into contact with Cathar theology. There had been, around the turn of the century, a number of formal "disputations" between Cathars and orthodox preachers, and indeed between Cathars and Waldensian preachers; there was also a strong tradition of lay discussion of matters of the faith, both orthodox and heretical; and finally there was always the possibility of questioning heretics, rather than simply receiving their words as passive listeners. "Preaching" covered a lot of ground for the inquisitors, who were primarily concerned with the implications of preaching without authority. But this does not necessarily mean that one has to discount the impression given by the inquisitorial records. Margery Kempe, of course, famously problematizes the lines between "preaching", "discussion" and "spreading the word".<sup>38</sup> For the Cathars, or rather for the Languedocian laity, too, these lines might be interestingly blurred.

One last point on audience: there are a small number of occasions in the 1220s when Cathars preached to groups made up solely or overwhelmingly of women. Over all the depositions, there are seventeen occasions when women form the majority of the audience; twelve of these are in the 1220s. For example, in 1226, the Cathar bishop Guilhabert de Castres preached in his own *domus* to a group of eight women plus a few men.<sup>39</sup> On another occasion in 1228 we are given a very clear picture of separate groups of women (eight in number) and men (fifteen in number) going to the same *domus* at different times to hear the bishop Vigoroux de la Baconne.<sup>40</sup> There are problems with interpreting this slight pattern: much of the evidence comes from the deposition of one woman, H  lis de Mazerolles, and as Abels and Harrison have pointed out, female deponents have a tendency to mention more women than

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<sup>38</sup> Clarissa W. Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim; The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca, 1983) 108–9.

<sup>39</sup> D23 172v.

<sup>40</sup> Compare D22 21r (men) and 21v (women). For other occasions, see D22 14v; D23 3r, 3v, 73v–74r, 168v [two items], 170r, 170r/v, 171r, 171v, 176v, 258r; D24 263r; D25 49v, 50v.

their male counterparts.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, there is a possible suggestion that at this point, the Cathars were on occasions preaching to gender-divided audiences. There is one other note of evidence in favor of this: the deponent Pierre de Beauville recalled seeing Pons de Ste-Foy, Cathar deacon, preaching to Raymonde de Ranaville:

and then the said deacon had preached of Mary Magdalene and Mary her sister, and of the example they gave as women to have good hope.<sup>42</sup>

This is, I think, the only time Mary Magdalene appears in the evidence; given the Cathars' more habitual theological misogyny, this might be an example of finding a sermon to fit the audience.<sup>43</sup>

### *Time and place*

On the question of timing, there is some evidence that the Cathars preached on the same days on which one would expect orthodox preaching.<sup>44</sup> A witness called Berengar de Lavellanet recalled seeing the Cathar bishops Bertrand Marty and Raymond Aguilher, in the late 1230s, at the *castrum* of Montségur, "preaching publicly in their houses on Sundays and feast days".<sup>45</sup> Another witness stresses the activity of Bertrand Marty, and that preaching occurred "on each Sunday and feast day", and other witnesses remember similar occasions.<sup>46</sup> For the most part, however, the witnesses do not specify. This might lead us to surmise that although preaching was prepared for these special days, much of it also took place without reference to the ecclesiastical calendar. There is some evidence to suggest that preaching after a meal was relatively common, but again one can only suggest a partial pattern, since preaching during the day also occurred.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Abels and Harrison, "Participation of Women," 225.

<sup>42</sup> D25 314v.

<sup>43</sup> On Cathar theological misogyny, see Peter Biller, "Cathars and Material Women," in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*, York Studies in Medieval Theology 1, eds. Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis (York, 1997) 61–107. My thanks to the author for pre-publication access to this piece.

<sup>44</sup> On the timing of orthodox preaching, see Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire*, 23, 206–7.

<sup>45</sup> D24 58r.

<sup>46</sup> D24 75v. See also D23 227r/v; D24 175v–176r; D25 57r, 74v.

<sup>47</sup> See the discussion of Guillaume Bélibaste's preaching, below; and, in contrast, other occasions noted in the deposition of Arnaud Sicre. The

As to where the *perfecti* preached, the answer is again complicated by the problems of the evidence mentioned above.<sup>48</sup> However, the picture produced by the evidence is clear. On occasion the Cathars preached outside: for example, we twice find preaching in a cemetery,<sup>49</sup> and eleven other items specifically indicate some public place such as a town square. *Perfecti* also preached in more out-of-the-way settings, such as in a place called Las Sauseras, near Baure; or in a wood called Angles.<sup>50</sup> However, around three quarters of the items show preaching within a house, whether the *domus* of a heretic or the *domus* of a lay adherent.<sup>51</sup> Several witnesses who mention attending preaching at Montségur specify that the specific site of preaching was the *domus* of the bishop Bertrand Marty. One in fact states that a house was set aside for this purpose: "Bertrand Marty many times preached in a certain *domus* which was designated for making sermons (*"deputat ad faciendum sermonem"*), and many male and female heretics came there to hear the sermon of the said heretic".<sup>52</sup> However, many of the items relate to preaching within a lay *domus*, around half of the total number of items, or two thirds of the occasions that took place inside rather than in public.

There is, of course, a chronological element to this picture: in the earlier years of the thirteenth century, and even during the Crusade, the Cathars had sufficient political support to sustain their own "houses". In the 1230s and early 1240s, the stronghold of Montségur is mentioned frequently. After the Crusade, and particularly after 1244, Cathar preaching moved predominantly into the lay household.<sup>53</sup> So the picture is not tremendously surprising,

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secondary literature usually notes a move to more secretive meetings given at night. This is certainly the case for meetings to "console" dying believers, and may also be the case for preaching, but it must be noted that secrecy is not overwhelming in the later evidence.

<sup>48</sup> One should also note that the inquisitors operated within a tradition which had a dual, if paradoxical, set of *topoi*: that heretics preached in hidden assemblies, which was bad; and that heretics preached publicly, which was rebellious, and bad.

<sup>49</sup> D24 28v, 29r.

<sup>50</sup> D24 17r, 26r; D24 14r, 34r. Other woods are also mentioned, e.g., D23 78r/v.

<sup>51</sup> This figure assumes that items at Montségur, except where otherwise stated, took place within a *domus*. If these items are taken to indicate "outside" preaching, the percentage drops to around sixty percent.

<sup>52</sup> D23 202r. See also D24 175v, 186r, 198r [twice] and *passim*.

<sup>53</sup> There is also, of course, less preaching mentioned after 1244: forty-eight items in total. Of these, thirty-six specify that the preaching took place within



but it does have some interesting implications when related back to my previous points on the audience for preaching. On a few occasions we can see items which depict a fairly structured occasion, where the sermon was delivered within a context of formality and respect, or at any rate was designed to be. The sermons to larger groups of people, particularly on feast days, give this impression, and it is further supported by an item of negative evidence: one deponent recalled being present at a sermon of Bertrand Marty's, and being berated by their host Raymond Isarn for afterwards failing to "adore" the heretic—that is, to make a formal ritual of respect towards him. Isarn called them all "beasts" and said that Bertrand was "one of the best men in the world".<sup>54</sup> Formality also appears in the later evidence: the witness Guillemette Benet reported that, when visiting the house of some friends, she found Guillemette and Mengarde Belot kneeling before the *perfectus* Guillaume Authié, who was preaching to them.<sup>55</sup> These items suggest a formal, hierarchical context, but are not conclusive, since "adoration" could also take place within other contexts, such as meeting and leaving heretics. While taking these occasions into account, it must be noted that the majority of Cathar preaching, both before and after the Albigensian Crusade, took place within a less formal context. The setting was often the lay *domus*, and the audience was frequently small in number and linked by other social or familial bonds. When considering the kind of speech-act or event that preaching constituted, these elements of context must be taken into account.

*A Cathar preaches: The sermons of Guillaume Belibaste:  
The sermons*

Having given an impression of the context of Cathar preaching in the thirteenth century, I want now to look briefly and finally at four linked sermons given by a Cathar *perfectus* in the early fourteenth century, one Guillaume Bélibaste. My intention is not only

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a lay house. There are only two mentions of a heretical house, both in Apulia in Italy; these may be assumed to be items dealing with the same Italian *domus*.

<sup>54</sup> D23 141v.

<sup>55</sup> *Fournier* I, 477; *Registre* II, 474; note that Guillemette did not recall *what* Guillaume had preached.

to present in greater detail one of the few occasions when we have access to what Cathar preaching might contain; I also hope to examine again the context of preaching, and the *idea* of preaching. The evidence for these sermons comes from the deposition of Arnaud Sicre, a spy for the Inquisition. Béliaste should not be taken as being representative of all Catharism; apart from the particular milieu for Catharism in the early fourteenth century which I have already sketched out, Béliaste himself was not, perhaps, a very devout Cathar.<sup>56</sup> However, Arnaud Sicre's evidence provides us with an example of a *perfectus* preaching the word, or rather "the understanding of *le Be*, the Good", as the witnesses frequently term it. I will begin by briefly relating the four sermons.

Béliaste's first sermon was given at the *domus* of a believer called Guillemette Maury, the audience comprising Guillemette, her sons Jean and Arnaud Maury, her brother Pierre Maury, and Arnaud Sicre. After dinner, the heretic began to preach on the topic of "St Paul who was the first persecutor of the good men [that is, the *perfecti*]." <sup>57</sup> His sermon began thus:

When [St Paul] was in a certain town where two good men had preached, in order to capture them and lead them to their death, he was called by Christ, who asked him why he persecuted them, and moreover blinded him. And then he promised Christ that thenceforth he would be of his faith, and would not persecute the good men, if he would restore his sight. And this done he renounced the master he served, and thenceforth desired to have the faith of the good men and not the faith of his said master. And thus the persecutor of the good men was made a good man.<sup>58</sup>

Béliaste went on to explain that Peter and Paul were the founders of their church:

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<sup>56</sup> See Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, 70, 97–102 and *passim*. On Arnaud, see *Montaillou*, 33–4 and *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> *Fournier* II, 25; *Registre* III, 754–5.

<sup>58</sup> *Fournier* II, 25; *Registre* III, 755: ... *et postea quando ibat ad quamdam civitatem in qua predicaverant duo boni homines ut eos caperet et duceret ad mortem, fuit vocatus a Christo, et dictum fuit ei per eum cur persequeretur suos, et etiam excecatus. Deinde promisit Christo quod de cetero esset fidei eius et non persequeretur bonos homines si ei redderet visum; quod factum fuisset renunciavit domino suo cum quo stabat, quod de cetero volebat esse de fide bonorum hominum et non de fide dicti domini sui; et sic de persecutore bonorum hominum factus fuit bonus homo. Et postea addidit quod sanctus Paulus et Petrus fuerunt fundatores fidei eorum et Ecclesie, et eorum fidem tenuerunt, quia, ut dixit, Christus dixit Petro: "Vocaris Petrus et habes cor petre", id est cor firmum in fide sicut petra est firma, "et propter hoc super te edificabo Ecclesiam meam", que est nostra Ecclesia.*

Christ said to Peter "You are called Peter, and have a heart of stone", that is a heart firm in faith, just as a stone is firm, "and because of this on you I will build my church",<sup>59</sup> that is, our church.

The rest of the sermon was given over to explaining how the pope falsely claimed to represent the true church, and that he is called pope [*papa*] because he pulped [*papat*] the people with tithes and indulgences.<sup>60</sup>

The second sermon again took place before the same audience, at Guillemette Maury's *domus* after dinner. Bélibaste began by paraphrasing the story of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30), reworking the parable by placing Christ as the man who shared out his money. This he glossed thus:

when God gave him the understanding of the Good, he wished for him to diffuse it through all the world by preaching, and that he preferred to have one believer than all the gold in the world.<sup>61</sup>

He continued with the parable of the first and the last (Matt. 20:1–16). This Bélibaste explicated to Arnaud as meaning that when he, Arnaud, gained the understanding of the Good, it would be as great a reward and source of hope as it was to Bélibaste himself, although Bélibaste had come to it through fasting and pious living, whereas Arnaud would get it, as it were, for minimum effort.

The third sermon occurred the following night; Arnaud had bought fish for the Maury's supper, and Pierre Maury said to Bélibaste,

"While we are preparing this fish, give us some good words." And then the said heretic, after thinking a little while, said: "The Holy Father said with his mouth that no one should do to another what he would not wish to be done to him". Then he continued: "It is written [*invenire*] that the Holy Father was in the sky with the holy spirits in his Kingdom and his glory. Then Satan, the enemy of the Holy Father, wishing to trouble the peace and Kingdom of the Holy Father, went to the door of the Kingdom of the Holy Father and stayed at the door for thirty-two years ... Finally, the guardian of that door ... allowed him in. And when he was amongst the good spirits he stayed with them for one year, hidden amongst them ... And he began to solicit the good spirits, saying to them "Do you have no other glory or attraction than that which I see ...?"<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Matt. 16:18.

<sup>60</sup> *Fournier* II, 25–6; *Registre* III, 755.

<sup>61</sup> *Fournier* II, 32; *Registre* III, 760.

<sup>62</sup> *Fournier* II, 33; *Registre* III, 760–1: *Et tunc dictus Petrus Maurini dixit dicto heretico, "Domine, dum pisces parantur, dicatis nobis aliqua bona verba", et tunc dictus*

Bélibaste continued at length, explaining that Satan tempted the spirits with earthly things (particularly women) thus bringing about the Fall from Heaven and the imprisonment of the spirits within earthly bodies, leading to the process of metempsychosis.<sup>63</sup>

Bélibaste's last sermon picks up where this leaves off. It was given in a vineyard, after dinner; Pierre Maury led Arnaud and Bélibaste outside, saying "walls have ears".<sup>64</sup> Bélibaste preached at length: God was now pondering the sorrow of the fallen. He decides to write a book (taking forty years to compose), containing all the woes of the flesh; and to decree that whoever sustained all of these punishments would be the Son of God. Many of the holy spirits, wishing to gain more honor than the others, approached the book and read it. However, after reading only a little of the torments, they fell down in spasms; none wished to forgo the glory that they had and take on such penalties. Then one spirit called John presented himself, saying that he wished to be the Son of God and to complete all that was written in the book.

And approaching the said book, he opened it, he read in it four or five pages, and fell down in a spasm beside the book. And he stayed thus for three days and nights. And when he revived, he wept greatly. But because he had promised to complete all that was contained in the said book, and had not lied, he said to the Father that he wished to be his Son, and to complete all that the said book contained, however severe it was.<sup>65</sup>

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*hereticus, postquam aliquantulum cogitaverat, dixit, "Pater sanctus dixit ore suo quod nullus debet facere alteri quod non vult fieri sibi". Deinde intulit: "Invenitur quod Pater sanctus steterat in celo cum sanctis spiritibus in regno suo, et gloria. Deinde Sathanas inimicus Patris sancti, ut turbaret quietem Patris sancti et regnum eius, iivit ad portam regni Patris Sancti et stetit ad portam per xxxii annos. Non permittebatur intrare. Tandem quidam ianitor dicte porte, videns quod per longum tempus expectaverat ad portam et non fuerat adhuc permissus intrare, introduxit illum in regnum Patris sancti. Et cum fuit inter spiritus bonos stetit cum eis per annum absconditus inter eos, ne Pater sanctus eum videret." Et incepit sollicitare spiritus bonos, dicens eis: "Et non habetis aliam gloriam vel delectacionem nisi illam quam video vos habere?"*

<sup>63</sup> Fournier II, 33–6; Registre III, 761–3. Metempsychosis is the passing of the soul at death into a new body.

<sup>64</sup> Fournier II, 44–5; Registre III, 770.

<sup>65</sup> Fournier II, 45–6; Registre III, 771: *Et accedens ad dictum librum aperuit ipsum, legit in eo quatuor vel quinque folia, et spasmatum cecidit iuxta librum. Et stetit sic per tres dies et noctes. Et deinde spergefactus ploravit multum; et quia promiserat se completurum illa que in dicto libro continebantur, et mentiri non debebat, dixit Patri quod ipse volebat esse eius Filius, et complere illa omnia que in dicto libro continebantur, quantumcumque gravia essent illa.*

Bélibaste continued in some detail, relating the life and Passion of Christ (John) in detail. It is worth emphasizing one element within this rich narrative: when Christ reappears to the apostles, they become very learned and are able to speak in all tongues. They are also given the power to hand on, from good man to good man, this act of grace; and they are warned to beware of false preachers. They are thus sent out to preach. This is, of course, the genealogy of the Cathars. The suffering of Christ prefigures the suffering of the *perfecti*; or rather, the *perfecti* echo Christ's suffering. Their preaching is a direct fulfillment of the task set by Christ, passed on from hand to hand, generation to generation. Preaching is then, in a sense, the presence of the pure spirit within the world of devilish corporeality. Bélibaste concludes by noting that the popes try to claim this authority for themselves; his proof against this claim is to relate the mystical ascent into Heaven by a Cathar *perfectus*, a narrative drawn from the *Vision of Isaiah*, a Bogomil text adopted by the Cathars.<sup>66</sup> Again, preaching is linked to access to the Godhead.<sup>67</sup>

### *The context and idea of preaching*

Bélibaste employs what Anne Brenon has seen as a classical model of Cathar preaching: he takes a biblical text or narrative and explicates it.<sup>68</sup> In Bélibaste's case, that explication is almost always concerned with emphasizing the apostolic, or even pre-apostolic, roots of the Cathar church.<sup>69</sup> He also uses what Brenon has described as "historiettes imagées", for example "the story of the horseshoe", to illustrate particular things, such as metempsychosis.<sup>70</sup> It must be noted that although the *perfectus* does use these tales, as Brenon suggests, to explain theological points to illiterate

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<sup>66</sup> Fournier II, 50–2; *Registre* III, 774–5. A translation of the Bogomil text is provided in Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 447–58.

<sup>67</sup> This is all of what Bélibaste is presented as *preaching* in Arnaud's deposition; he does, however, impart further information about the Cathar faith during conversation.

<sup>68</sup> Brenon, *Vrai visage*, 24.

<sup>69</sup> On the Cathars' emphasis of their apostolic roots, see Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 11 and *passim*; Brenon, *Vrai visage*, 23 and *passim*.

<sup>70</sup> The story of the horseshoe tells of a *perfectus* who knows where to find a horseshoe that had fallen from his hoof in a previous, equine life. See Fournier II, 36; *Registre* III, 764; Brenon, "Bons chrétiens," 139ff.

believers, he only brings them into use when *questioned* by his audience. His primary mode of preaching is to stick to scriptural exegesis; and, indeed, his first response to questions is often to resort to scriptural quotation to defend his point.<sup>71</sup> Elements of his preaching are tied in to the immediate context: for example, he continually returns to the financial greediness of the orthodox church, a theme which had particular valency in the Sabarthès, where many people, both Cathar and Catholic, were upset about tithes introduced by Jacques Fournier himself.<sup>72</sup> And when talking about the dangers of false prophets, who are most obviously the mendicants, Bélibaste permits himself a particularly pointed gloss: he says that false prophets should be understood as false believers, who creep amongst the good believers in order to denounce and betray the *perfecti*; and Bélibaste looked at Arnaud (who was, remember, a spy) and said, "O Arnaud, take care that you are not a false prophet!"<sup>73</sup> However, for the most part, what is notable about Bélibaste's sermons is how textual and abstract they are. His main task is to confirm the authority of the Cathars and their apostolic heritage; but there are few immediate concessions to a "popular" audience.

One might consider, then, some different concepts of "preaching" in Arnaud's deposition, Bélibaste's sermon, and, perhaps, the history of Cathar preaching I have sketched out above. The concepts of the "Good" and the gospels are closely intertwined; in fact, people joining the Cathar sect were usually asked to give themselves to "the Good Men and to the gospels".<sup>74</sup> Although a few deponents do say that their adherence to Catharism began on account of the words they heard the *perfecti* say, the vast majority talk simply about belief in the Good Men, and admiration for their way of life. And the Cathars themselves responded to that: it was in their behavior as much as their theology that they sought to persuade people to their faith.<sup>75</sup> Their preaching is intimately

<sup>71</sup> See for examples of Scripture and stories *Fournier* II, 35–6; *Registre* III, 763.

<sup>72</sup> Le Roy Ladurie, *Montailou*, 261 and *passim*. See also the deposition of Raymond de Laburat, *Fournier* II, 305–29; *Registre* II, 675–95.

<sup>73</sup> *Fournier* II, 47–8; *Registre* III, 773.

<sup>74</sup> For example, D23 4v.

<sup>75</sup> The Cathars might therefore be seen as leading by word and example, following the twelfth-century monastic tradition. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Docere Verbo et Exemplo. An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula, Montana, 1979).

intertwined with their way of life; they are on show all of the time, and hence their preaching is not limited to formal interactions at the pulpit.

However, there is a certain way in which the spectacle of their lives incorporated within it the spectacle of preaching. Cathar preaching, following Cathar theology, could not exactly be exhortatory. If one wishes to look for contrasts between orthodox and Cathar preaching, this is perhaps the essential difference. The main messages of the sermons were to shun the orthodox church, and to agree to give oneself to the Good Men at the end of one's life, and thus attain salvation through their faith. There was theologically no "good life" to lead as a lay person: either one had received the *consolamentum*, the ritual of purification, and was therefore saved; or one had not, and was thus damned to the metempsychotic cycle. One thinks back to Bélibaste's framing of the life of Christ: God's book, which took forty years to write, containing all the sorrows of man. The angel John—Christ—fulfilled the tasks *already set down* in God's book. Although Christ had initially to choose to adopt his position, the story, once begun, involves no element of struggle or choice, but is simply the playing out of what is *already* written. In some ways this seems a good metaphor for Cathar preaching itself. Christ returned to Earth and sent the apostles out to spread the good word, and to spread the power of grace through the laying-on of hands; but there is no gloss as to what that good word might have been, or how one is to relate to it.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, almost nothing can fill that place, since there is no exhortatory element to the Word: it simply *is* and will always be.

Given this, perhaps the essential point about Cathar preaching is this: the great preaching sect had at its core a certain lack. The *perfecti* were, in their own eyes, direct descendants of the pure spirits, and their preaching was the sole presence of the divine amidst the corrupt world. But, in many ways, the inquisitors were right: *what* the Cathars preached was unimportant. Following Bélibaste's story, it was not so much the content of preaching but its *symbolic* importance that was at stake, the fact that one did it at all rather than what exactly one communicated. Bélibaste noted that

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<sup>76</sup> Note however that the concept of preaching as a "gift" given by God was a strong element within orthodox thought too. See Alcuin Blamires, "Women and Preaching in Medieval Orthodoxy, Heresy and Saints' Lives," *Viator* 26 (1995) 135–52, 141ff.

the Roman pontiffs tried to claim the power of preaching as their own, but that they were lying. However, his proof for this did not rely upon a critique of Catholic theology or concepts. Instead, Béliaste's resource for authority was another claim to direct access to the Godhead: the mystical ascent into Heaven, related in the *Vision of Isaiah*. Cathar preaching was a sign of their apostolic heritage, and their apostolic heritage was fulfilled through preaching. In the preaching of the Cathars, content was not primarily at stake; it was essentially the *idea* of preaching that mattered, both for the *perfecti* and the inquisitors.

If, for the *perfecti*, preaching was part of maintaining and consolidating their privileged spiritual positions, was it read similarly by their audience? In some ways, it undoubtedly was: as I have mentioned above, preaching occurred on occasions within clearly hierarchical contexts, and even the more "informal" preaching within the *domus* was not free of some structure or power. Within Arnaud Sicre's deposition, we find various Cathar sympathizers who drew explicit and unflattering parallels between the Good Men and the mendicant friars: that the Cathars fast for three days after the death of a believer, to help their soul go on to Heaven, whereas the friars demand money;<sup>77</sup> or that the priests and the friars preach about not eating meat, but actually gorge themselves.<sup>78</sup> For the believers, there was a strong sense that the authority of preaching came from the correlation between words and actions; the mendicants do not behave well, and are not to be trusted. The Good Men display their apostolic authority in their everyday lives.

However, in beginning to examine the *various* things we might understand "preaching" to be, we may begin to question other areas: its reception, the way in which faith is propagated, the kind of power relations involved in the social theater of the sermon. As a small beginning, one can note some of the ways in which lay people used preaching. Throughout Arnaud's deposition, we are shown Guillemette and Pierre Maury, amongst others, discussing matters of the faith with the spy. Whether or not Béliaste's sermons prompted these discussions one cannot say; but one can note that just as Béliaste had recourse to scripture, so too did the

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<sup>77</sup> *Fournier* II, 29–30; *Registre* III, 758.

<sup>78</sup> *Fournier* II, 24; *Registre* III, 754.



Maurys, albeit to a lesser extent.<sup>79</sup> So perhaps the access to theology and scripture given by the heretical sermon supplied the deponents with a language for their own discussions.<sup>80</sup>

At the same time, one must note that the deponents did not simply parrot the words of the *perfecti*, or automatically supplicate their authority; on a few occasions we are told what opinions the audience held of their preachers. Pierre Maury, for example, told Arnaud that Béliaste,

does not know how to preach; when you hear lords Pierre and Jacques Autier [that is, the senior Cathars] preaching, it is a glory, and they know well how to preach.<sup>81</sup>

Elsewhere, a deponent called Sybille Peyre similarly affirmed that Jacques Autier “spoke with the mouth of an angel”.<sup>82</sup> One must remember that the audience was not necessarily passive, nor overawed; that preaching does not automatically operate as an authoritative speech-act, poured into the open minds of the laity. One man, in the mid-twelfth century, reported that he had been to hear both the Cathars and the Waldensians preaching, in order to assess which were the best lot.<sup>83</sup> To further undercut the preaching of the Cathars, let me finally note one more vignette from the earlier history of Catharism: a deponent recalled coming across the Cathar deacon Bernard Bonnefous, and two other heretics, in a wood, in about 1233. Other people arrived, and the deacon preached. In the middle of the sermon, the deponent’s brother arrived with another man. As he recalled, these two began to laugh and immediately left.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Fournier* II, 26, 29; *Registre* III, 755, 758. Both Guillemette and Pierre quote from the gospel of Matthew, which is prominent in Béliaste’s sermons.

<sup>80</sup> Note that I am not suggesting that this process was limited to heretical preaching; indeed, one might explore the possibility that the information we have for the reception of Cathar preaching might prompt further questions about orthodox preaching too.

<sup>81</sup> *Fournier* II, 28; *Registre* III, 757.

<sup>82</sup> *Fournier* II, 406; *Registre* II, 569.

<sup>83</sup> D21 242v.

<sup>84</sup> D23 66v. My thanks to the Newman Fellowships Trust for aiding me financially in attending the conference where a version of this paper was first delivered; to Carolyn Muessig for her encouragement; and to all the participants at the conference for their helpful comments and criticisms. I am also indebted to Dr Peter Biller for access in advance to his forthcoming work, and for much more besides. Thanks also to Felicity Jones for comments.

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**PART SIX**

**PREACHING MONASTIC REFORM**



THE RELIGIOUS'S ROLE IN A POST-FOURTH-LATERAN  
WORLD: JACQUES DE VITRY'S *SERMONES AD STATUS* AND  
*HISTORIA OCCIDENTALIS*

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Jacques de Vitry's career, historical writings, and sermons have often been used as core sources for the religious history of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Certainly he was ideally poised both to observe and to influence contemporary religious movements, which ranged from established religious orders to the quasi-regular beguines and Humiliati, to a new emphasis upon preaching and confession and the wider availability of the crusade vow. A Paris master from Peter the Chanter's circle and canon regular at Oignies in Brabant-Flanders, he was rooted in the rich canonical and Cistercian traditions of the diocese of Liège, yet became a prescient advocate of the early Dominicans and Franciscans. An influential reform preacher, auxiliary bishop of Liège (1227–29), and cardinal of Tusculum (1229–40) under Gregory IX, he shaped local and papal policies toward religious orders.<sup>1</sup> Why is it, then, that the biases, internal logic, and historical sweep of his writings, particularly the *Historia Occidentalis*, have been so neglected? This paper will suggest some fruitful avenues of inquiry. What contemporary and future social roles does Jacques de Vitry envisage for the monastic and quasi-monastic movements? How does the idealized schema of the monastic orders presented in his history compare with his advice to religious and laity in his *Sermones ad status* and evidence from his own career? Finally, how

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<sup>1</sup> For his biography, see Philipp Funk, *Jakob von Vitry, Leben und Werke* (Berlin, 1909), updated by John F. Hinnebusch, *The Historia Occidentalis of Jacques de Vitry: A Critical Edition* (Fribourg, 1972) (hereafter *H. Occ.*) and Ernest McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1954) 20–39, 154–64, 312–5, 434, 456–64. It should be noted that a French translation of the *Historia Occidentalis* has just been published: Jacques de Vitry, *Histoire occidentale*, trans., Gaston Duchet-Suchaux, intro. and notes by Jean Longère (Paris, 1997). I am presently preparing an English translation for Liverpool University Press.

does Jacques's vision for the monastic orders compare to that of other writers, including Joachim of Fiore and Innocent III?

In comparing the history with the sermons, we must note that while the former probably reached its first redaction around 1221, the latter were most likely collected during Jacques's cardinalate.<sup>2</sup> The history reflects Jacques's enthusiasm shortly after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), as its decrees partly codified the efforts of Innocent III, Jacques, and their circle to reform existing religious orders, channel the direction of new religious expressions, and provide pastoral care to the laity.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the sermons, compiled from the perspective of Gregory IX's curia, illustrate the reshuffling of monastic roles after the explosive growth of the mendicant orders and the partial success of the Fourth Lateran Council's platform for the laity.

Jacques opens his history with a jeremiad, squarely blaming the dire state of the world upon the sins of the laity, the religious, and primarily, the secular clergy. The institutional providers of pastoral care must emend themselves, for God is already seeking alternative witnesses, preaching through demoniacs and providing examples of penance through women recluses.<sup>4</sup> Jacques here revoices the concerns of the Gregorian Reform, which had seen outbursts of lay piety, attempts to reform the institutionalized church, and the foundation of new religious orders by *Wanderprediger*. These concerns continued in the proliferation of religious

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<sup>2</sup> *H. Occ.*, 16–20; Jean Longère, "Les chanoines réguliers d'après trois prédicateurs du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Jacques de Vitry, Guibert de Tournai, Humbert de Romans," in *Le monde des chanoines* (XI<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> s.) Cahiers de Fanjeaux 24 (Fanjeaux, 1989) 257–83, at 257. The *Sermones ad status* are currently being edited by Jean Longère. For now, see the lacunae-ridden edition by J.-B. Pitra, *Analecta novissima spicilegii Solesmensis: Altera continuatio*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1888) 189–93, 344–61, and the literature cited in Carolyn Muessig, "Paradigms of Sanctity for Thirteenth-Century Women," in *Models of Holiness in Medieval Sermons*, ed. Beverly M. Kienzle (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1996) 85–102, particularly note 9. For the unpublished *Sermones ad status*, I will be using Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 503 (hereafter Douai).

<sup>3</sup> See the work of Robert of Courson and Stephen Langton in M. Dickson and C. Dickson, "Le Cardinal Robert de Courson: Sa vie," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 9 (1934) 53–142; *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, 1205–1313*, eds. F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney, 2 parts (Oxford, 1964) 23–36, 100–25, 154–5, 165–7.

<sup>4</sup> *H. Occ.*, 73–4, 77–81, 83–5, 87–8. Compare C. Baraut, "Un tratado inédito de Joaquín de Fiore: *De Vita Sancti Benedicti et de Officio Divino Secundum eius doctrinam*," *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia* 24 (1951) 33–122, especially 52–60, 107–13 (hereafter VSB).

movements under the guise of the *vita apostolica* in the twelfth century.<sup>5</sup> In fact, Jacques describes his ideal pastor and preacher, Fulk of Neuilly, the disciples he sends out in his lifetime, and the generation which follows him in terms not inappropriate for the hermit preachers of the Gregorian Reform. Both the earlier *Wanderprediger* and the new Paris preachers sought to reform the state of the Western church and convert the laity and clergy from vice through their preaching, with the effect that many of their converts entered a new, wider range of religious orders.<sup>6</sup> However, there are important differences. Firstly, Fulk is a secular parish priest connected with the new moral theology current in Peter the Chanter's circle in Paris. Jacques's solicitude in guarding the pastoral rights of a revitalized diocesan clergy, while present in his history, is stressed much more in his later sermons, and was an important factor in papal limitation of the religious orders' pastoral role. Secondly, the list of Fulk's disciples is revealing: its members are drawn from nearly the entire spectrum of monastic orders and secular clergy. However, while Jacques extends pastoral functions to virtually all religious in his history, by the time he is writing his sermons he has experienced a fundamental change of mind, and denies all pastoral roles to hermits, Benedictines, and Cistercians.<sup>7</sup> The problem of which functions are appropriate to which orders within the church becomes more complex as the history

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<sup>5</sup> For the Gregorian Reform, see Norman Cantor, "The Crisis of Western Monasticism, 1050-1130," *American Historical Review* 66 (1960) 47-54; Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe, 1000-1150* (London, 1984). For the *vita apostolica*, see Giles Constable, "Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Oxford, 1982) 52-8; Ernest W. McDonnell, "The Vita Apostolica: Diversity or Dissent?" *Church History* 24 (1955) 15-31; M.D. Chenu, "Moines, clercs, laïcs au carrefour de la vie évangélique (XII<sup>e</sup> siècle)," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 49 (1954) 59-89, especially 62-3; idem, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on the New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago, 1968) 204-69, especially 205-9, 259 (hereafter *NMS*).

<sup>6</sup> *H. Occ.*, 94-106, 108; Leyser, 90-3, 69-77. He describes a similar renewal through religious orders and crusading fervor in the East [*Historia Orientalis*, ed. F. Moschus (1597; reprint, Farnborough, 1971), chap. 71ff. (hereafter *H. Or.*)].

<sup>7</sup> *H. Occ.*, 94-103, 114-5, 143-4, 127. A group of co-preachers from the older monastic orders accompanied Jacques when he preached the Albigensian crusade (McDonnell, *Beguines*, 28). However, he does not portray hermits as preachers (McDonnell, 108-10), save the exceptional case of Peter the Hermit (*H. Or.*, chaps. 16-7, 20, pp. 46-50, 53).



progresses and the very terms *ordo* and *religio* begin to dissolve. We will treat the responsibilities he assigns to each type of religious, concluding with his application of monastic ideals to the laity.

*Hermits: the contemplative in solitude*

Jacques's historical treatment of the hermits is problematic, as he reverts to the traditional portrait of the hermit as a cenobite who progresses to a solitary life, in contrast to the hermit preachers of the Gregorian Reform.<sup>8</sup> His sermons to hermits reveal the values and responsibilities he would assign to cloistered monks. He stresses the centrality of geographic and mental solitude to the eremitical vocation; their only ministry is prayer.<sup>9</sup> The new hermits' emphasis upon preaching and service to neighbor, combined with the revitalized concept of the *vita apostolica* as communal life in poverty, became the basis of many twelfth-century religious movements. Yet Jacques visualizes an apostolic succession of reformers from the new hermits to Paris-sanctioned preachers such as Fulk of Neuilly, regular canons, and the mendicants, condemning hermits who preach as *gyrovagi*. The images of Bernard of Abbeville and Peter the Hermit, used to powerful force in his histories, were too dangerous to recommend to hermits in sermons.<sup>10</sup>

*Cenobitic life and the Gregorian Reform*

In his treatment of communal regular life, Jacques emphasizes the underlying unity of monastic variety in four central principles: renunciation of the world and of private possessions, obedience, and continence. He breaks down the various forms of monasticism to two basic types: the monks who follow the Rule of Benedict and the canons who follow the Augustinian Rule. However, as these

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<sup>8</sup> *H. Occ.*, 109–10; Leyser, 78–80.

<sup>9</sup> Douai, fols. 325v–327r, 328r–329r. For a strikingly similar treatment of hermits, see the *Libellus de Diversis Ordinibus et Professionibus Qui sunt in Aecclesia*, eds. and trans. Giles Constable and B. Smith (Oxford, 1972) 5–17.

<sup>10</sup> Yet he knew of the institutions these wandering hermits founded for their converts (note 12 below).

older monastic traditions departed from their first zeal, Jacques describes what some call the Gregorian reform movement, where people left to serve God under another habit and institution.<sup>11</sup>

*Black monks: contemplatives competing with the diocesan clergy*

Before we deal with these new institutions, we will first probe Jacques's view of the black monks and his explanation for their "dissolution". In the history, he praises some black monks for still adhering to the *districcione religionis*, notably the reformed Cluniac convents of Afflighem and Fontevrault and the monastery of Thiron, which insisted upon a literal adherence to the Rule. He uses their ascetic feats, hospitality, humility, poverty, and the fact that many of them became pastorally minded prelates as a counter-example to some ambitious and wealthy Benedictines.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, in a sermon to black monks, after cursorily mentioning the special spiritual privileges of the cloistered life, Jacques criticizes the Benedictines for falling away from the observance of their Rule. Clearly he had encountered and absorbed the Cistercians' criticism of the Benedictines for their compromise regarding the Benedictine Rule, which the Cistercians claimed to follow literally.<sup>13</sup> Visualizing poverty as an essential component of the *vita apostolica*, he duns the Benedictines for retaining personal possessions and links to the secular world, but stops short of the complete voluntary poverty espoused by the Franciscans, where even goods in common were not allowed.<sup>14</sup>

However, he later revokes this toleration of communal wealth,

<sup>11</sup> *H. Occ.*, 110–1.

<sup>12</sup> *H. Occ.*, 127, 129–30. Fontevrault, Afflighem, and Thiron were founded by "new hermits". See *H. Occ.*, 270–2, 255–6, 297; Leyser, 113–5; David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 1950) 201–2.

<sup>13</sup> Privileges (Pitra, 372); breaking the Rule (Douai, fols. 297r–v; Pitra, 373), cf. *VSB*, 38, 52–60, 68–9, and Knowles, 462–3, 466–8.

<sup>14</sup> Neither the abbot nor the pope could dispense from the sin of owning private property. See Pitra, 374; Douai, fol. 299v; sermon to black nuns in Jean Longère, "Quatre sermons 'ad religiosas' de Jacques de Vitry," in *Les religieuses en France au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Michel Parisse (Nancy, 1989) 252; Brenda Bolton, "Via Ascetica: A Papal Quandary," in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. W.J. Sheils, *Studies in Church History* 22 (Oxford, 1985) 161–91, at 178–9; Third Lateran Council (1179), Canon 10, in J. Alberigo, et al., *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, 3rd rev. ed. (Bologna, 1972) 217.9–26; notes 3 and 13 above.

pointing to a vicious cycle where alms are granted to religious communities because people admire their fervor and want to alleviate their hardship. However, these riches destroy religion, rendering religious incontinent and dissolute. Laymen and secular princes, seeing their excesses, not only withdraw their alms but despoil them, and so they are reduced to the poverty of necessity.<sup>15</sup> Other complaints attached to this central failing include a lack of hospitality to the poor and travelers, and acceptance of donations from usurers and thieves. This last criticism points to Jacques's most vitriolic gripe against the black monks—their reluctance to bow to the authority of the diocesan church. By accepting alms from usurers and thieves in return for burial or prayer, they were undermining episcopal courts which depended upon the threat of excommunication to bring such men to justice.<sup>16</sup>

Jacques, Innocent III, and his immediate successors were all concerned with the practicalities of reforming autonomous and exempt Benedictine monasteries, and he points to self-policing general chapters modeled after those of the Cistercians and episcopal visitation as the cure, a solution embodied in Canon 12 of the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>17</sup> Quoting Bernard's *De consideratione* in an unpolitic fashion, he claims that exemptions which remove the

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<sup>15</sup> Douai, fols. 301r-v, 306r-v (to white monks); *VSB*, 46-50, 54-5, 62, 68-90. He may have been referring to the depredations of the English kings upon both black and white monks, information easily garnered from Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, who taught in Paris while Jacques was a student (Knowles, 268-72, 302-5, 366-70).

<sup>16</sup> Douai, fols. 301r-v; *H. Occ.*, 129, reprised in his sermons to white nuns and monks, etc. (Longère, "Ad religiosas," 275-6; Douai, fols. 304v, 306r). This complaint stems from Peter the Chanter's circle's campaign against usury. The concern was that, after accepting his alms, the monks would bury the usurer (or robber), removing him from the sanction of the secular church authorities, who often excommunicated usurers until they made restitution. The monks thus not only circumvented ecclesiastical justice, but deprived the victims of their restitution. See Canons 9 and 25 of the Third Lateran Council (1179) and Canon 57 of the Fourth Lateran Council in *COD*, 215.35-217.2, 223.21-9, 261.6-38. I am writing an article on this subject.

<sup>17</sup> Both Innocent and Jacques stressed the necessity of monastic congregations possessing self-policing faculties. Innocent III chose the Cistercian order and their general chapter as the model for reforming other orders. See *H. Occ.*, 112-3; *VSB*, 47-50; Bolton, "Via Ascetica," 161-5, 175-82; Ursmer Berlière, "Innocent III et la réorganisation des monastères Bénédictines," *Revb* 32 (1920) 22-42, 145-59; M. Maccarrone, *Studi su Innocenzo III* (Padua, 1972) 226, 230, 234-5, 246-55; Canon 12, Fourth Lateran Council in *COD*, 240.29-241.38; Knowles, 649-61, 272-6, 301-2, 311-45, 583-91. On efforts to apply this program, see C.R. Cheney, *Episcopal Visitation of Monasteries in the Thirteenth Century* (Manchester, 1931); Maccarrone, 251-3; Knowles, 370-4.

abbot from the supervision of the bishop result in unprotected monasteries and dissolute monks.<sup>18</sup> He also excoriates abbots for usurping the bishops' pastoral office, as they do not possess the knowledge of the Old and New Testaments necessary to refute the enemies of the church. The bishop's regalia are as useless to an abbot as genitals to a mule!<sup>19</sup>

As a Paris-educated man and bishop himself, Jacques clearly resents the intrusion of black monks into church government and pastoral offices, and seems intent upon relegating them to a purely contemplative role. However, for Jacques, this did not mean the older schema of Benedictine cloisters supported by vast possessions and in intimate congress with the bureaucratic world of secular and episcopal courts, but a complete separation from the world in the poverty essential for contemplation.<sup>20</sup>

*The Cistercians: papal workhorses or sublime contemplatives?*

From where did Jacques derive this idea? The religious ferment of the mid-eleventh century has been described as a reform movement within monasticism which turned away from involvement in the world to eremiticism. However, another element central to the twelfth-century *vita apostolica* was a ministerial impulse manifested in preaching.<sup>21</sup> This fundamental tension of withdrawal from the world and the duty to save it was manifest in Bernard of Clairvaux's life and in the writings of twelfth-century Cistercians.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione ad Eugeniam papam*, in *SBO* 3, par. 17–18, 444–6; Martha G. Newman, *The Boundaries of Charity: Cistercian Culture and Ecclesiastical Reform, 1098–1180* (Stanford, 1996) 12, 40–1, 69–81, 110–170. Cistercian influence on the Innocentian reform programme should be reassessed. Jacques used elements from *De consideratione* in his plans for reforming the church and we know that Innocent esteemed Bernard highly.

<sup>19</sup> Douai, fol. 307r; Canons 60–1, Fourth Lateran Council in *COD*, 262.20–30, 262.31–263.6.

<sup>20</sup> Douai, fol. 301r, cf. *Libellus*, 18–9, 24–9. On the Benedictines' involvement with the feudal world order and criticism of this, see Cantor, 47–67; Chenu, "Moines," 60–80; *NMS*, 204–17; Knowles, 267–345; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Docere Verbo et Exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula, Mont., 1979) 106–7, 117–8, 123; Ursmer Berlière, "L'Exercice du ministère paroissial par les moines dans le haut moyen-âge," *Revb* 39 (1927) 227–50, 340–64, especially 238–50. See Gregory IX's statutes for the reform of black monks in 1235 and 1237 during Jacques's cardinalate (*ibid.*, 346).

<sup>21</sup> Bynum, *Docere*, 2, 91; Chenu, "Moines," 69–70; *NMS*, 213.

<sup>22</sup> See note 5 above; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the*

Jacques unconsciously recognizes this conflict when he describes monasteries such as Val-des-Choux, Grandmont, and the Carthusians, who embraced rigid seclusion from the world and contemplation rather than ministry.<sup>23</sup>

However, the Cistercians were not to escape so easily. Innocent III used the new pastoral component of the *vita apostolica* to press them into service as preachers.<sup>24</sup> Jacques too, initially envisions the Cistercians as preachers in his history, portraying Bernard and others as such.<sup>25</sup> For he had personally witnessed Cistercian preaching efforts,<sup>26</sup> as under Innocent III, the order was made the papal workhorse, utilized in a wide range of missionary and reform efforts, including the preaching of the Fourth, Albigensian, and Fifth Crusades. The close-knit organization of the Cistercians theoretically provided the resources needed for wide-scale pastoral work, yet the role of the wandering preacher fundamentally compromised their ideal of monastic contemplation in a fixed location and often made them reluctant to undertake the task.<sup>27</sup>

Jacques's attitude toward the Cistercians' involvement in the world seems to have undergone an evolution, for while his history highlights their preaching role, his sermons are completely silent, even negative, on this point. It may be that he knew that even

*Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982) 59–81; Bynum, *Docere*, 129–36, 162–3, 181–91, 194–5, especially 191; Newman, 17, 147, 165–7, 240–2. While Bynum suggests that the Cistercians had embraced the pastoral ethos by the thirteenth century, Newman argues that this issue was resolved much earlier (Bynum, *Docere*, 148, 157, 192–5; Newman, especially 2–18, 43–65, 97–129, 148–56, 167, 238–43).

<sup>23</sup> Founded by the hermit preachers of the Gregorian Reform. Val-des-Choux (*H. Occ.*, 120–1, 297); Grandmont (Leyser 115; *H. Occ.*, 125–7, Knowles 203–4); Carthusians (*H. Occ.*, 123–4; Knowles, 375–91). See Bolton, “*Via Ascetica*,” 161–5, 170–4.

<sup>24</sup> PL 214, 122; PL 215, 358–60; PL 217, 311–2.

<sup>25</sup> *H. Occ.*, 112–5. But see Knowles, 218, 252–3; Bynum, *Docere*, 164–9.

<sup>26</sup> Jacques knew many Cistercians preaching in the Midi, including Adam, abbot of Perseigne, and Fulk, bishop of Toulouse. Guy, abbot of Vaux-de-Cernay near Paris, and Hélinand of Froidmont are two others possibly linked to Jacques [Beverly M. Kienzle, “Hélinand de Froidmont et la prédication cistercienne dans le Midi, 1145–1229,” in *La prédication en Pays d’Oc (XI<sup>e</sup>–début XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 32 (Fanjeaux, 1997) 37–67]; *H. Occ.*, 102–3, 254–5; M. Zerner-Chardavoine, “L’abbé Gui des Vaux-de-Cernay, prédicateur de croisade,” in *Les Cisterciens de Languedoc: XIII<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> s.*, ed. Jean Leclercq, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 21 (Fanjeaux, 1986) 183–204, especially 186–7, 198, 201; Brenda Bolton, “Fulk of Toulouse: The Escape that Failed,” *Church, Society and Politics*, ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Church History 12 (Oxford, 1975) 83–93.

<sup>27</sup> Bolton, “*Via Ascetica*,” 183, 185–8; Kienzle, 1, 6–10.

Bernard had labeled himself a chimera, a monk paradoxically embroiled in the world. Or perhaps, since his sermons were addressed to white monks in general, many of whom were eremitical, he chose to concentrate on the monastic elements they shared in common.<sup>28</sup>

In a sermon to white monks, Jacques immediately broaches the topic of the relationship between the active and contemplative life.<sup>29</sup> Yet he then reproaches the Cistercians for sharing many of the Benedictines' failings, including a penchant for endless legal cases, calling them to a similar goal of contemplation in isolationist poverty, to the reclusive component of their new-hermit tradition.<sup>30</sup> Historians have noted that despite their enthusiasm for a literal interpretation of the Benedictine Rule, the Cistercians did not manage to avoid many of the elements they attacked in the Benedictines, including their vast possessions and utilization for bureaucratic service.<sup>31</sup> One powerful contrast to this was their preaching, which Jacques denies them in his sermons. Perhaps he was influenced by Cistercian writers such as Joachim of Fiore, who, trapped in the responsibility implicit in *caritas* for one's neighbor, acknowledged the necessity of involvement in the world while working for the day in which they could hand over their reforming duties to a renovated secular clergy and return to the contemplative life.<sup>32</sup> Although he was intimately linked with the Cistercian community and had witnessed their ministry to

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<sup>28</sup> Newman, 240–1; *H. Occ.*, 119–27.

<sup>29</sup> Douai, fols. 302r–v; *VSB*, 65, 70–2.

<sup>30</sup> Riches (Douai, fols. 306r–v); leaving cloister (fols. 303v–304r, 304v–306r); neo-eremitical tradition (fol. 306v); against legal cases (fols. 304v, 306r–v, Canon 6, Third Lateran Council, in *COD*, 214.29–33, PL 214:1106–7, Bolton “*Via Ascetica*,” 182–5; Newman, 160, 198–200).

<sup>31</sup> Bolton, “*Via Ascetica*,” 182–3. Contrast *VSB*, 42, 46, 54–60, 62, 68–9, 73 with the *Libellus*' simple acceptance (46–53).

<sup>32</sup> Newman, especially 117–20, 140–1. For the role Joachim assigned to the Cistercian order within the church, his deliberately obscure prophecies of future preaching orders, and his influence upon Innocent III, see F. Robb, “Who hath chosen the Better Part?” (Luke 10,42): Pope Innocent III and Joachim of Fiore on the Diverse Forms of Religious Life,” in *Monastic Studies II: The Continuity of Tradition*, ed. Joan Loades (Bangor, 1991) 161–6; *VSB* 61–5, 67–8, 70–3, 89–90, 96–110, 113–7; Marjory Reeves and B. Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, 1972) 238–40; Marjory Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Notre Dame, 1993) 135–90. Jacques could have known Joachim's work through Adam of Perseigne, who was assigned to the commission which examined his works (see note 26 above).

religious women in Brabant-Flanders and their anti-heretical preaching in the Midi,<sup>33</sup> by 1229, as a cardinal in Gregory IX's curia, he saw their pastoral functions as being better fulfilled by other orders, namely the canons regular (among whom he classes the Dominicans), the secular clergy, and the friars minor.<sup>34</sup>

### *The canons regular*

In his sermons to canons regular, Jacques patently considers them to be religious or regulars along with monks, which is not surprising considering the amount of twelfth-century canonical literature devoted to making their "royal middle way" the equivalent of the monastic vocation.<sup>35</sup> Jacques himself had been a canon regular at Oignies in Brabant-Flanders. While he only obliquely treats the canonry's activities in his *Vita* of Mary of Oignies, we know that they were responsible for at least one parish church, and he portrays them primarily as preachers.<sup>36</sup> This pastoral image is intensified in a supplement written by Thomas of Cantimpré, who was familiar with canonical ideals as a Dominican.<sup>37</sup> The Oignies community had active links with Cistercian monasteries and nunneries in the area as well as canonries in Liège and Nivelles, and fostered lay expressions of the *vita apostolica* in the area, including the quasi-regular beguines.<sup>38</sup> Although Caroline Walker Bynum has emphasized that twelfth-century canons regular were

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<sup>33</sup> Notes 1 and 27 above; Simone Roisin, "L'efflorescence cistercienne et le courant féminin de piété au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 39 (1943) 342–73; Walter Simons, "The Beguine Movement in the Southern Low Countries: A Reassessment," *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 59 (1989) 63–105.

<sup>34</sup> See note 32 above.

<sup>35</sup> *H. Occ.*, 130–44. The debate continues. See Bynum, *Docere*, 2–8 and notes; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 22–36; NMS, 204, 207; Chenu, "Moines," 71–2; *Libellus*, 4–5, 56–117; Jean Longère, "Quatre sermons 'ad canonicos' de Jacques de Vitry," *Recherches augustiniennes* 23 (1988) 151–212, at 188; Longère, "Les chanoines réguliers," 263, 273, 277, note 17, at 280; Maccarrone, note 4, at 256.

<sup>36</sup> McDonnell, *Beguines*, 8–27, 33.

<sup>37</sup> Jacques de Vitry, *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis*, ed. D. Papebroeck, in *Acta Sanctorum*, June 4 (Antwerp, 1707) 636–66 (hereafter *VMO*). Thomas of Cantimpré, *Supplementum*, in *ibid.*, 666–76.

<sup>38</sup> Jacques de Vitry, *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Leiden, 1960) "Ep.2," 79, "Ep.6," 123, "Ep.7," 134 (hereafter Huygens); *VMO*, 639, 644, 653, 656, 657, 664, 666; Joseph Greven, "Der Ursprung des Beginenwesens," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 35 (1914) 25–58.

not involved in pastoral work by definition, they are the only religious thus far to whom Jacques assigns the work of preaching and the *cura animarum* both in his history and in his sermons.<sup>39</sup>

Although Jacques acknowledges the wide variety of canonical communities, he focuses on those with a pastoral orientation, including the Praemonstratensians, the Victorines, and the early Dominicans. All three follow the common life, espouse poverty either through manual labor or mendicancy, and combine canonical hours with pastoral care.<sup>40</sup> However, St Victor in Paris and the Dominicans of Bologna shared a new element: they were associated with new centers of theology and canon law. Jacques, as a former Paris master, vaunts the pastoral theology of Hugh of St Victor and the fact that like Fulk of Neuilly, the Dominicans studied only to transmit their learning to the laity through preaching.<sup>41</sup>

*The Dominicans: combining the order of preachers and order of canons*

For Jacques, the Dominicans are trained literate preachers with spotless reputations and no other duties save their pastoral work, which enables them to supplement the ill-organized efforts of bishops to educate their laity. And in fact, this is what Fulk of Toulouse had originally instituted the early Dominicans to do, foreshadowing Canon 10 of the Fourth Lateran Council, which suggested that each bishop commission a group of preachers to act as supplementary pastoral carers for his diocese.<sup>42</sup> Jacques visualizes

<sup>39</sup> *H. Occ.*, 133–4, 137–9, 142–4; *Libellus*, 56–7, 80–1, 92–3; Bynum, *Docere*, 3, 18–21; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 36–57; Longère, “Ad canonicos,” 203–4; Longère, “Chanoines réguliers,” 270, 277.

<sup>40</sup> *H. Occ.*, 133–5, 137–9, 142–4. He met the early Dominicans in Bologna and knew Gervase, abbot of Prémontré, and John the Teuton, abbot of St Victor.

<sup>41</sup> *H. Occ.*, 94–103, 106, 143–4. See the student order of the Val-des-Ecoliers, which also stressed poverty and rejection of the world (Longère, “Chanoines réguliers,” 243, 263). The mendicants, too, would later move into Paris (*NMS*, 241).

<sup>42</sup> *H. Occ.*, 143–4; Canon 10 of Fourth Lateran Council in *COD*, 239.26–237.3; Simon Tugwell, “Friars and Canons: The Earliest Dominicans,” in *Monastic Studies II: The Continuity of Tradition*, ed. Joan Loades (Bangor, 1991) 194–5; M.-H. Vicaire, *Saint Dominic and His Times*, trans. Kathleen Pond (London, 1964) particularly 170–83. Jacques helped found a community of Dominicans in Liège in 1229 (McDonnell, *Beguines*, 38–9).



the canons regular as a permanent adjunct to the diocesan clergy, hailing the Dominicans as those who combine the order of canons with the order of preachers.<sup>43</sup> This view complements his Gregorian impulse to regularize the life of the clergy, as we can see from his attitude toward secular canons, whom he would have act like canons regular as much as their diocesan responsibilities allow.<sup>44</sup>

For Jacques, the apostolic life has passed from the black and white monks to the preaching friars who refresh the entire world with the bread of the word.<sup>45</sup> In a dramatic counter to his opening portrait of a world declining to night, Jacques insists that through a rejection of temporal goods, the church is returned to the state of the early church. He hails the Dominicans for embracing the apostolic ideal as they, "naked, follow the naked Christ", by espousing the most extreme version of voluntary poverty possible, and appeals to other canons to follow their example.<sup>46</sup>

### *The Franciscans: the fourth religio*

While Jacques envisages the Dominicans and regular canons as an *in situ* task force supplementing episcopal and parish preaching,<sup>47</sup> he hails the early Franciscans as a new order of mobile apostles, a fourth *religio* added to hermits, monks, and canons. In a Joachimist note, he welcomes them as an order of preachers, a revival of the early church which will combat the Antichrist in the last age of the world.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The Dominicans initially followed the Rule of St Augustine as canons regular. See Longère, "Chanoines réguliers," 267, 277–8; Bynum, *Docere*, 50–4, 72, 93; Tugwell, 193–207; P. Mandonnet, "Les chanoines-prêcheurs de Bologne d'après Jacques de Vitry," in *Saint Dominique: L'idée, l'homme et l'oeuvre*, ed. M.-H. Vicaire, 2 vols. (Paris, 1937) 1:231–47; Vicaire, *Saint Dominic and His Times*, 164–216; contrast McDonnell, *Beguines*, 36–9.

<sup>44</sup> Douai, fols. 265r–274v. On earlier calls to regularize the secular clergy, see Bynum, *Docere*, 2–3, 50–4; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 10–1, 24–7; Newman, especially 141–70.

<sup>45</sup> Longère, "Ad canonicos," 183–4. See Gregory ix's bull of 1234 in Vicaire, *Saint Dominic and His Times*, 387–8.

<sup>46</sup> Longère, "Ad canonicos," 183–4; J. Châtillon, *Le mouvement canonial au moyen âge, réforme de l'église, spiritualité, et culture*, ed. Patrice Sicard (Paris, 1992) especially 201–21.

<sup>47</sup> Longère, "Ad canonicos," 191–2, 194, 196, 198, 201.

<sup>48</sup> *H. Occ.*, 158–63, note 33 above.

However, Jacques's attitude toward the Franciscans had undergone a marked evolution. When the first Franciscans arrived in Paris in 1217, the bishop and masters of Paris had at first suspected them of heresy.<sup>49</sup> Jacques's involvement with the beguine movement not only prepared him to respond more favorably to the Franciscans, but may have resulted in his placing the two movements in communication with each other.<sup>50</sup> Two of his surviving letters mention the early Franciscans, and are most probably addressed to his contacts in the beguine and Cistercian communities in the diocese of Liège. The earliest letter ecstatically describes the Franciscans in terms of the primitive church, and lauds their combination of manual labor, evangelization, and contemplation, as well as their institutional structure of a yearly chapter followed by dispersion to preach. They are the antidote to mute and corrupt prelates.<sup>51</sup> However, a later letter reveals his reservations. Dismayed over the defection of part of his reformed diocesan clergy to the Franciscan order, he worries that the order's lack of a novitiate means that greenhorn friars will be sent out to preach.<sup>52</sup>

His sermons to the friars minor address these and other contemporary concerns wracking the order. He calls them to obey the precepts laid down by Francis, warding off any mitigation of their voluntary poverty or obedience to the pope.<sup>53</sup> He also specifies their exact relations to prelates and other religious, a concern of Innocent III and Francis himself. They are not to criticize prelates and clerks, particularly when preaching to the laity. Rather, they are to

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<sup>49</sup> A. Callebaut, "Autour de la rencontre à Florence de s. François et du cardinal Hugolin (en été 1217)," *Archivum franciscanum historicum* 19 (1926) 530, 533, 540, 543. Jacques was writing the masters of Paris at this time (Huygens, "Ep.2," 79, "Ep.7," 134).

<sup>50</sup> See discussion below and P. Gemelli, "Giacomo da Vitry e le Origini del Movimento Francescano," *Aevum* 39 (1965) 474–95 at 485, note 56; Callebaut, 547, 546–57; McDonnell, *Beguines*, 312–5, 434.

<sup>51</sup> Huygens, "Ep.1," 75–6.

<sup>52</sup> Huygens, "Ep.6," 123, 131–3 and notes. There is some question as to whether the episode of Francis at Damietta is a later interpolation, but the description of the early friars and the opinion of them is synchronous with Jacques's sermons to them. See Christoph T. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994) 8–17.

<sup>53</sup> F. Hilarin, "Jacobi Vitriacensis Episcopi et Cardinalis (1180–1240), *Sermones ad Fratres Minores*," *Analecta Ordinis Minorum Capuccinorum* 19 (1903) 150–1 (obedience) 115–6, 118–9, 121, 153–4 (against mitigation of voluntary poverty); Rosalind Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure* (Cambridge, 1959) 87–8, 134, 148–52, 168, 192, 203.

respect them for their office, and rebuke them in secret, submitting themselves to all prelates.<sup>54</sup>

In line with his previous misgivings, Jacques insists that those who are sent out to preach must be literate, poor, and discrete, tailoring their message to various audiences.<sup>55</sup> They must preach only at their superior's command and avoid association with worldly courts.<sup>56</sup> However, his canonical and Paris background leads him to oppose Francis' emphasis upon simplicity and those who said that learning made one proud. He, as did the masters who filled the top posts in the Franciscan order by the 1220s onward, stressed learning even if it meant undermining the principal tenets of the order. Drawing from the canonical tradition, Jacques maintains the necessity of combining contemplation and preaching, and of becoming a living example.<sup>57</sup> All, even those who come to learning late and without innate intelligence, must study the Scriptures to acquire prudence and virtues. Otherwise they will scandalize the laity like those who, fresh from the schools, over zealously and publicly correct the faults of other religious. Prepared by his background as a master in Paris and his field experience to value educated preaching above all else, Jacques, as did Gregory IX and Honorius III, saw the Franciscans and Dominicans as orders which could serve the entire church, even if the demands of service meant eroding their ideals. For him, the Franciscans and Dominicans were part of the answer to the thirteenth-century crisis in pastoral care.<sup>58</sup>

*The church: spiritual unity and functional diversity*

This crisis was contemporary to the proliferation of religious orders in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, which provoked various reactions. Those in the more established monastic

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<sup>54</sup> Hilarin, 154–8; Rosalind Brooke, *The Coming of the Friars* (Cambridge, 1975) 24–8, 32; idem, *Government*, 60–9, 69–76, 132–3, 203; McDonnell, *Beguines*, 456–64.

<sup>55</sup> Hilarin, 114, 116–8, 120–1 (learning); 156–7 (discretion); 158 (*vita apostolica*).

<sup>56</sup> Hilarin, 117–8; Brooke, *Government*, 57, 60–1, 113, 127–9, 206.

<sup>57</sup> Brooke, *Government*, 58–60, 64, 69–76, 85–7, 115, 127–31, 159–60, 192, 198, 203–6, 225, 243–4. Compare Jacques's insistence on combining contemplation and action (Hilarin, 116–20) with note 32 above.

<sup>58</sup> Brooke, *Government*, 60–76, 133–4 and note 57 above.

orders felt threatened, while members of newer orders pointed to an underlying unity among the diversity necessary for the health of the church,<sup>59</sup> including many quasi-regular groups which offered novel spiritual options to the laity.<sup>60</sup> However, the multiplication of new orders and quasi-religious communities who claimed to be religious yet were bound by no rule could lead to scandal and confusion among the laity, who understandably could lose the fine distinction between regular and quasi-regular.<sup>61</sup> This danger was recognized even by those who fostered diversity, such as Innocent III, and led ultimately to Canon 13 of the Fourth Lateran Council, which forced those who wanted the status of regulars to live according to an approved rule.<sup>62</sup>

These regulations typify Innocent's desire to preserve diversity of religious life, while maintaining unity and ensuring that orders had internal reform mechanisms. His embrace of functional diversity within the religious orders was paired with an attempt to unite different functions within one all-embracing structure. Pointing to the will to dedicate oneself to the religious life as a principle which could unite persons living under various rules, he attempted to unite all the nuns in Rome under one rule, as well as the various religious serving as missionaries in Livonia, and at one point, the three divisions of the Humiliati.<sup>63</sup>

This emphasis upon unity within Christendom, of interdependence rather than hierarchy of functions within the church, was the result of tremendous social and religious change during the twelfth century. The new stress upon pastoral care and Innocent

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<sup>59</sup> Such as the *Libellus* and Jacques himself. *Libellus*, xi–xix, xx–xxiii, xxv, 2–5, 16–7; *NMS*, 217–9; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 12–4; Beryl Smalley, "Ecclesiastical Attitudes to Novelty, c.1100–c.1250," in *Church, Society and Politics*, ed. Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History* 12 (Oxford, 1975) 113–31; Reeves, 135–44.

<sup>60</sup> Jacques included many of these new options in his history and sermons, see McDonnell, *Beguines*, 20–39, 107–9, 154–7; contrast Brenda Bolton, "*Mulieres Sanctae*," in *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World*, ed. Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History* 10 (Oxford, 1973) especially 84, 92–5.

<sup>61</sup> *Libellus*, 36–7, 54–7, 118–9; Maccarrone, 313; Chenu, "Moines," note 1, 74–5.

<sup>62</sup> Maccarrone, 308–1, 319–20; Brenda Bolton, "Tradition and Temerity: Papal Attitudes to Deviants, 1159–1216," in *Schism, Heresy and Social Protest*, ed. Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History* 9 (Cambridge, 1972) 79–91; Canon 13 of Fourth Lateran Council in *COD*, 242.1–9.

<sup>63</sup> Gregory IX continued the reform of Rome's monasteries during Jacques's cardinalate. See Maccarrone, 268–78; Brenda Bolton, "Daughters of Rome: All One in Christ Jesus!" in *Women in the Church*, eds. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood, *Studies in Church History* 27 (Oxford, 1990) 108–9, 111–5.

III's fostering of new means of religious and quasi-religious spiritual expression led to a novel emphasis upon one's ability to achieve salvation within one's *ordo*, within the world, rather than being forced to leave it altogether. The validation of lay life led to a pastoral revolution, the dissolution of rigid societal schemas, and the compilation of *Sermones ad status* such as Jacques himself wrote.<sup>64</sup>

In fact, after treating the general spiritual revival sparked by the preaching of Fulk and his disciples, Jacques goes on to speak of those who entered religious orders, but it is well understood that others led penitent lives in the world. Later in his history, he declares that those who live in the world according to the observances and institutions proper to their order may also be called regulars.<sup>65</sup> He not only claims a status equal to the religious for bishops and priests in their pastoral role, but extends this status to the laity.<sup>66</sup> The underlying principle here is a spiritual unity which preserves functional diversity, the same vision found in Joachim of Fiore's diagram for the third *status*. The church is no longer a hierarchy of functions, but a network of dependence. Rather than forcing Christian lay people to abandon the laity to achieve salvation, an order of clerks diffuses those monastic values practicable by lay people.<sup>67</sup> This vision affected papal policy in several ways. Firstly, it led to an emphasis upon penance, confession, and preaching in the Fourth Lateran Council in an effort to bring monastic values to the laity in the world.<sup>68</sup> Secondly, it led to a diversity of monastic and quasi-monastic institutions being made available to lay people. And, in a combination of the two above, functions which various religious groups had attempted to reserve for themselves, such as preaching, were now allowed, albeit under careful restrictions, to the laity themselves.

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<sup>64</sup> *H. Occ.*, 165–6; *NMS*, 213–65; Chenu, "Moines," 73–9; Newman, 97–112.

<sup>65</sup> *H. Occ.*, 107–8, 165–6.

<sup>66</sup> *H. Occ.*, 166. Clear-cut definitions of "monk", "canon", etc., were foreign to Jacques and Innocent III. See Longère, "Chanoines réguliers," 263, 280 and note 17; Tugwell, "Friars and Canons," 197–99; Maccarrone, 306, 310.

<sup>67</sup> Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, 232–48, especially 242–8; *VSB*, 50, 52, 76–7, 81, 83.

<sup>68</sup> Canons 1, 10–11, 21 in *COD*, respectively 230–1, 239–40, 245; Chenu, "Moines," 79–80.

*The Humiliati and Franciscans: the regular and quasi-regular laity*

We can see this new emphasis upon functional diversity, unity of religious intent, and a new role for the laity illustrated in Jacques's treatment of the Franciscans and Humiliati.<sup>69</sup> He emphasizes the continent laity's function within the Humiliati, calling them congregations of men and women who live *regulariter*, communally and in voluntary poverty. Both lay people and clergy say the canonical hours, and devote themselves to reading, prayer, and manual labor. Both lay people and clergy have papal permission to preach and confound heretics in public debate while converting noble and powerful citizens. And although Jacques specifically mentions priests and clerks joining the order, he emphasizes that of the lay people converted, some enter the order, but others remain married and live in the religious habit while remaining physically in the world.<sup>70</sup>

Innocent, as did Jacques, seemed to stress the devotion toward a religious life over and above whatever particular rule or habit a group might espouse. This is illustrated in Innocent's policy toward the Humiliati, where he initially wanted to unite the components of canons regular, married, and chaste laity under one *regulare propositum* or religious profession, living together under one rule, but not technically monks or canons.<sup>71</sup> Although this proposal was scrapped, and true monastic status was reserved for the canons and unmarried religious laity, religious functions were beginning to transcend the lay-clerk divide.<sup>72</sup>

Just as Jacques journeyed to Perugia in an attempt to win the privilege of mutual self-exhortation for his quasi-regular beguines, so Innocent showed flexibility in granting the privilege to exhort to lay semi-regulars such as the Humiliati, reconciled Waldensians, and Poor Catholics.<sup>73</sup> If such jealously guarded privileges were being granted to laymen, albeit semi-regular ones, what would

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<sup>69</sup> See the discussion below and Hilarin, 117–22; *H. Occ.*, 158–63.

<sup>70</sup> *H. Occ.*, 145–6.

<sup>71</sup> Maccarrone, 285; Brenda Bolton, "Innocent III's Treatment of the Humiliati," in *Popular Belief and Practice*, eds. G.J. Cuming and Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History* 8 (Cambridge, 1972) 73–82.

<sup>72</sup> Maccarrone, 287–9; Robb, 157–60; *NMS*, 202–8, 222; Bolton, "Humiliati," 76–9.

<sup>73</sup> Huygens, "Ep.1.," 74; Bolton, "Tradition and Temerity," 73–82; Bolton, "Humiliati," 73–82; *NMS*, 260.

happen to the status of the regular? When Jacques claims that each order, whether lay, monastic, or clerical, has its own rules and institutions by which it lives, is he moving toward the vision of all orders as equivalent goods?

*The diffusion of monastic values to the laity*

Jacques's sermons to the lay orders certainly reflect the osmosis of apostolic or monastic values to the rest of society. He recommends voluntary poverty, prayer, manual labor, and degrees of chastity to lay people, reserving only the binding obedience of the monastic vow. He accomplishes this by stressing the religious intent behind life rather than the strict legality of the religious profession. For example, in his sermons to various categories of women, he not only offers a wide spectrum of degrees of chastity, but emphasizes mental and penitential intent rather than strict physical purity of the flesh.<sup>74</sup>

For manual labor, universally lauded in his sermons to monks and laity, Jacques stresses that if it is undertaken with the mental attitude of making satisfaction for one's sin, it enables the laborer to earn eternal life as if he were a martyr, a hermit, a cloistered monk who sings and keeps vigil, or a cleric. Manual labor is a prop for the *res publica*, an imitation of the early church, a remedy for avarice and usury, and enables one to avoid idleness, support oneself, and aid poor neighbors. It is socially and spiritually preferable even to the mendicancy of the friars.<sup>75</sup>

Manual labor is linked to poverty, and these three elements not only form the basis of Jacques's recommendations to the regular

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<sup>74</sup> Sermons to white and black nuns in Longère, "Ad religiosas," 238–9, 242–4, 272–5, 292–3; sermons to virgins, Douai, fols. 428v–429v; Greven, "Ursprung," 46. Jacques most likely derived his attitude toward virginity from the Cistercians, who stressed continence and humility rather than physical intactness due to the fact that many of their converts were adults rather than oblates (Muessig, 99–101; Newman, 23–7). His sermons to married people address balancing conjugal rights with one partner's desire to remain chaste (Douai, fols. 416r–417v, especially 420r–v). For the degrees of chastity open to women and monastic elements practiced by them, see *VMO*, 636–66.

<sup>75</sup> "Sermo ad agricolas et alios operarios," ed. J.-T. Welter, in *L'Exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Âge* (Paris/Toulouse, 1927) 458–66; Longère, "Ad religiosas," 239, 249, 251–2; *VMO*, 646ff, especially 648–9; sermon to virgins in Greven, "Ursprung," 47, 57; sermons to farmers and artisans (Douai, fols. 402–403v, 406r).

religious, but to the quasi-regular movements such as the beguines, and to lay people.<sup>76</sup> This assignation of previously regular values to the laity is joined to an emphasis on lay people availing themselves of the new pastoral care manifest in confession, preaching, and a focus on basic prayers such as the *Ave Maria*, *Pater Noster*, and *Credo*. Even the challenge of continual prayer, previously reserved to contemplatives, is urged upon the laity.<sup>77</sup>

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Jacques de Vitry used his sermons and history to disseminate the reform program of the Paris circle, partly realized in the Fourth Lateran Council and papal policy. He sought to relegate the Cistercians, Benedictines, and hermits to a purely contemplative role, while proffering this same restricted monastic ideal to the laity, thus unwittingly eroding the special status of the monastic vocation. His stress on pastoral care as the overriding *raison d'être* of the clergy, derived from the polemical literature of the regular canons and masters in Paris, meant that he initially hailed preachers of any stripe in his history. However, as he witnessed the dilemma of the Cistercians plunged into pastoral care, he gradually realized that the mendicants were better equipped for this role, as they were as yet unburdened by a contrary ideal of contemplation in stability or crippling need for reform. His *Sermones ad status* envision them, the canon regulars, and a revitalized diocesan clergy as the solution to pastoral care. His history, and to an even larger extent his sermons, remain attempts to persuade the religious to follow the new reforms promulgated by the Paris circle, Innocent III, and his successors, while accepting their redefined spiritual niches within the church.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Sermon to beguines in Greven, "Ursprung," especially 44–7. His sermons to widows, the continent, children and married couples stress manual labor and the devotional opportunities offered by the church, including prayer, the sacraments, preaching, Mass, religious images, and the saints' intermediary role (Douai, fols. 423r, 426v–27r; austerity, 422r, 435r–v; useful trade, 437r, confession, etc., 437v–438r, 434v, 421r–v, 415v).

<sup>77</sup> *Sermo ad pueros* (Pitra, 439–42), note 76 above.

<sup>78</sup> I would like to express my warmest gratitude to Carolyn Muessig and Jean Longère for their generous assistance on the sermons of Jacques de Vitry, and to Christopher Tyerman, Norman Tanner, and Alexander Murray for their astute critiques of this piece. Any remaining errors are my



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MONASTIC IDEALS AND EPISCOPAL VISITATIONS:  
THE *SERMO AD RELIGIOSOS* OF ROBERT GROSSETESTE

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Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln (1235–53), has always been known as a highly dedicated episcopal administrator, as well as a zealous protector of proper pastoral care.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary chroniclers were more than happy to report the outrageous results when a man of such uncompromising principles encountered the rough and tumble world of politically and morally expedient men. The Benedictine chronicler, Matthew Paris, wasted few words in describing the disastrous effects of Grosseteste's attempt to be a corrector of monks. He reported that Grosseteste and his entourage of inspectors often went beyond the bounds of civility and reason in their investigations, and it was this attitude that landed the bishop of Lincoln in the middle of so many quarrels with monasteries. For example, in his inspection of the Abbey of Ramsey in 1251, Grosseteste went beyond the usual manner of inquiry, even searchings the monks' beds. Matthew reports that

if he chanced to find anything locked up, he destroyed it, and dashed the casket to pieces, and any cups he found bound with rings or furnished with feet, he trod under foot and broke to fragments, which if he had acted in a more temperate manner, he might at any rate have given whole to the poor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a general introduction to the life and works of Grosseteste, see R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1986); Francis Stevenson, *Robert Grosseteste: Bishop of Lincoln* (London, 1899); and, S.H. Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste* (Cambridge, 1940). For a treatment of Grosseteste's idea of the pastoral care, see Leonard E. Boyle, "Robert Grosseteste and the Pastoral Care," *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8 (1979) 3–51; and the introduction to Grosseteste's *Templum Dei*, eds. Joseph Goering and F.A.C. Mantello, *Toronto Medieval Latin Texts* 14 (Toronto, 1984) 1–24.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Henry R. Luard, 7 vols., *Rolls Series* 57 (London, 1874–89) 5:226. Translation from Stevenson, *Grosseteste*, 162.

Despite Matthew's accounts, as well as the testimony of other monastic annals of the period, no one has attempted to provide an explanation of Grosseteste's program of monastic visitation. It has been assumed that its severity was simply a mirror of his fastidious examination of the secular elements of his diocese. Such an assumption is not surprising. We know little of Grosseteste's specific ideas about the monastic life. Historians have known for some time that he had translated a Greek text on the monastic life for the abbey at Bury St Edmunds.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, it has been recently argued that one of his confessional treatises was written for a monastic audience. This work, written before he became bishop of Lincoln, is of particular importance since it reveals a great deal of sensitivity on Grosseteste's part to the monastic life, if only in the context of the sacrament of penance.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, none of these sources speak to the principles Grosseteste had in mind when he came to visit a monastic house. However, one of his sermons which bears the rubric *sermo ad religiosos* can provide a textual window into Grosseteste's view of monasticism. The sermon reveals what the criteria should be for an episcopal examination of a monastery. It was not simply Grosseteste's zealous personality that drove him to be at times severe in his monastic visitations; these visitations were also guided by a sophisticated conception of the monastic life, and of the means by which a community could obtain it.

#### *Authorship and date of composition*

A study of Grosseteste's sermons has yet to be completed, and for now we must be satisfied with the brief manuscript survey of S.H. Thomson. There are at least six collections, and this does not include isolated sermons which appear in other manuscripts. The analysis of the collections has been based solely on the list of contents, and has not yet extended to a critical study of textual

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<sup>3</sup> *Roberti Grosseteste episcopi quondam Lincolnensis Epistolae*, ed. Henry R. Luard, Rolls Series 25 (London, 1861) no. 57, 173–81; Thomson, *Writings*, 70–1, 203.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Grosseteste, *Perambulavit Iudas (Speculum confessionis)*, ed. Joseph Goering and F.A.C. Mantello, "The *Perambulavit Iudas (Speculum confessionis)* Attributed to Robert Grosseteste," *Revb* 102 (1986) 125–68.

transmission.<sup>5</sup> We do have some signposts to follow in that a few of these texts have been edited independently, notably by Servus Gieben and James McEvoy.<sup>6</sup> Gieben has come closest in providing a general account of Grosseteste's idea of preaching. Gieben's analysis was based on Grosseteste's comments about the importance of preaching in Christian ministry, but he did not attempt any thorough survey of Grosseteste's homiletic style.<sup>7</sup> Such a study will have to wait until the particulars of the textual transmission have been worked out.

The *sermo ad religiosos* (Sermon 68) is a case in point. Thomson stated that this sermon, extant in a thirteenth-century English manuscript now housed at Cambridge, Trinity College, was also one of Grosseteste's *Dicta*, namely *Dictum* 21. This was not a surprising assertion as there is a close relationship between this collection and Grosseteste's sermons. In fact, these *Dicta* were a series of sermons and notes from Grosseteste's days at Oxford, which he collected together after he had gone on to the bishop's chair.<sup>8</sup> A number of these sermons preached before both clergy and people also appear in the sermon collections.<sup>9</sup> However, in this particular case the *sermo ad religiosos* is not found in the *Dicta*. It is easy to understand why Thomson had made the mistake: the pericopes of Sermon 68 and *Dictum* 21 are identical, not to mention their first few lines. But after that, this *sermo ad religiosos* suddenly swerves into new territory. The sermon, edited here for the first time, is very different from *Dictum* 21 which concerns the nature of truth and its relation to the Incarnation and the history of salvation.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Thomson, *Writings*, 160–91.

<sup>6</sup> Servus Gieben, "Robert Grosseteste on Preaching. With the Edition of the Sermon *Ex rerum initiatarum* on Redemption," *Collectanea Franciscana* 37 (1967) 100–41; idem, "Robert Grosseteste and the Immaculate Conception. With the Text of the Sermon, *Tota pulchra es*," *Collectanea Franciscana* 28 (1958) 211–27; James McEvoy, "Robert Grosseteste's Theory of Human Nature. With the Text of his Conference, *Ecclesia sancta celebrat*," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 47 (1980) 131–87; and idem, "Grosseteste on the Soul's Care for the Body: A New Text and New Sources for the Idea," in *Aspectus et Affectus: Essays and Editions in Grosseteste and Medieval Intellectual Life in Honor of Richard C. Dales*, ed. Gunar Freibergs (New York, 1993) 37–56.

<sup>7</sup> Gieben, "Robert Grosseteste on Preaching," 100–10.

<sup>8</sup> See Thomson, *Writings*, 214–32, especially 219–20.

<sup>9</sup> Edwin J. Westermann, "A Comparison of Some of the Sermons and the *Dicta* of Robert Grosseteste," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 3 (1945) 49–68.

<sup>10</sup> London, British Library MS Royal 6.E.v, fols. 14va–15vb. See also Edwin J. Westermann, "An Edition, with Introduction and Notes of *Dicta* 1–50 of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235–1253," (Ph.D. diss., University of

The *sermo ad religiosos*, on the other hand, focuses on the monastic life.

The only copy of this sermon, then, is in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.38. It is English in provenance and dates from the mid-thirteenth century. The contents include liturgical texts, sermons, theological treatises, and sources for canon law. While it is difficult to ascertain a more specific provenance, it is significant to note that the sermons and theological works are by masters of theology who at some point had a connection with the university of Oxford.<sup>11</sup> For the study of Grosseteste this manuscript is very important, since it is an early record of some of his major theological tractates.<sup>12</sup> Nestled in the middle of the manuscript is a series of five sermons, which Thomson numbered as Sermons 68, 69, and 71 to 73 of Robert Grosseteste.<sup>13</sup> The first sermon is entitled "*sermo R. Lincolniensis ad religiosos*". Since "*Lincolniensis*" was a common cognomen for Grosseteste, it is reasonable to render the forename as "*Robertus*". The corroborative evidence is that four of these sermons also appear in Grosseteste's *Dicta* collection, although Thomson thought that all five did. While the rubrics connect all five sermons to a single author, we must establish further evidence that the *sermo ad religiosos* is indeed from Grosseteste's pen. Rubrics and colophons can be helpful, but they can sometimes be misleading, even ones that are contemporary with the production of the manuscript as in this case.

There is additional evidence to support Grosseteste's authorship. In the first place, the rich use of imagery, particularly in the allegorical exposition of the biblical texts, is not incongruous with his other writings.<sup>14</sup> We come to more solid footing when we

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Colorado, Boulder, 1942) 122–36.

<sup>11</sup> M.R. James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. A Descriptive Catalogue*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1900) 1:505–10. See also, R. James Long, "The Virgin as Olive Tree: A Marian Sermon of Richard Fishacre and Science at Oxford," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 52 (1982) 77–87; and, F. Pelster, "Eine Handschrift mit Predigten des Richard Fischacre OP und anderer Oxforder Lehrer," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 57 (1933) 615–7.

<sup>12</sup> Thomson, *Writings*, 13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of Grosseteste's interest in imagery, see Southern, *Robert Grosseteste*, 40–5. On his biblical exegesis, see Beryl Smalley, "The Biblical Scholar," in *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop. Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Death*, ed. Daniel A. Callus (Oxford, 1955) 70–97; and James R. Ginther, "Robert Grosseteste on the Four Senses of Scripture,"

consider the doctrinal features of the sermon. There are some instances in which the sermon includes almost verbatim descriptions found in Grosseteste's other works. For example, there is a parallel text found in Grosseteste's *Hexaëmeron*, which he completed while still at the Oxford *studium*.<sup>15</sup> The definition of patience found in the sermon echoes the definition found in *Dictum* 18.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the concluding sentence, in which the relationship between the Holy Spirit and love is compared with the role of light in the diffusion of color, echoes Grosseteste's theory of color found in his earlier scientific works.<sup>17</sup>

As well, both the explicit and implicit sources fit with what we know of Grosseteste's reading. Another fascinating text from his pen is a *Tabula distinctionum* in which Grosseteste arranges biblical, patristic, and some medieval sources under various subject headings of theological discourse.<sup>18</sup> All of the sources cited in the sermon are found in his reading list for theology. As for implicit sources, the sermon is awash in Pseudo-Dionysian concepts, and its author appears to have been familiar with the works of Pseudo-Dionysius. The fact that he translated and commented on the entire Pseudo-Dionysian corpus leads us to consider Grosseteste as the prime candidate for authorship.<sup>19</sup> All these loose bits of data,

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in *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. J.D. McAuliffe (forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> See APPENDIX, paragraph 10, note 16; and Robert Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron*, eds. Richard C. Dales and Servus Gieben, *Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi* 6 (London, 1982) Part 5, chap.20, par.1 and 3, 179.

<sup>16</sup> See APPENDIX, paragraph 13, note 32.

<sup>17</sup> See APPENDIX, paragraph 18, note 48. On Grosseteste's theory of color, see James McEvoy, "The Sun as *res* and *signum*: Grosseteste's Commentary on *Ecclesiasticus*, ch. 43, vv. 1–5," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 41 (1974) 38–91, at 69–70; and Brent S. Eastwood, "Medieval Empiricism: The Case of Robert Grosseteste's Optics," *Speculum* 43 (1968) 306–21.

<sup>18</sup> See S.H. Thompson, "Grosseteste's Topical Concordance of the Bible and the Fathers," *Speculum* 9 (1934) 139–44; and R.W. Hunt, "The Library of Robert Grosseteste," in *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop. Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Death*, ed. Daniel Callus, (Oxford, 1955) 121–45; and, Southern, *Robert Grosseteste*, 186–93. A critical edition has been completed by Philip W. Roseman in an appendix to Robert Grosseteste, *Opera* 1. *Expositio in Epistolam sancti Pauli ad Galatas. Glossarium in sancti Pauli fragments. Tabula*, ed. James McEvoy, CCCM 130 (Turnhout, 1995) 235–320.

<sup>19</sup> On Grosseteste's translation and appropriation of Pseudo-Dionysius, see James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford, 1982) 69–123; Daniel A. Callus, "The Date of Grosseteste's Translations and Commentaries of Pseudo-Dionysius and the Nicomachean Ethics," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 14 (1947) 186–209.



when brought together, establish a good case that this indeed is a sermon by Robert Grosseteste.

The date of the sermon may also be extrapolated from the text. The language and structure of the sermon seems to indicate that it was preached at the beginning of an episcopal visitation of a monastery. Grosseteste notes that he is before an assembled group of monks to preach (*presens sanctum uestrum collegium*). After presenting his case of what a monastic community ought to be, he concludes with the question: "Why do [these principles] not require some form of inquiry?" (*Quare quidem non modicam requirunt inquisitionem*). This would place the sermon during his episcopate. We cannot narrow the date to a single year, however. There is evidence that Grosseteste began to visit monasteries during his first visitation of the Lincoln diocese in 1235, and again in 1237.<sup>20</sup> There are also notices concerning visitations in 1239, 1240, 1243, 1248, 1250, and 1251.<sup>21</sup> Doubtless we have an incomplete picture of all that he accomplished in this respect.<sup>22</sup> These brief accounts, unfortunately, do not provide enough detail for us to consider at which visitation this sermon was preached. It is possible, however, to narrow the date of composition somewhat. The presence of Pseudo-Dionysian concepts indicates that the sermon was preached after Grosseteste had begun his translation of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus (c.1239–41). From approximately 1240 onwards, nearly all of Grosseteste's literary products reflect the Pseudo-Dionysian synthesis, and this sermon is no exception.<sup>23</sup> This would place the sermon within the last thirteen years of Grosseteste's episcopate. It would be unwise to narrow this date further based on the available evidence.

Thus, we are drawn to the beginning of an episcopal visitation of a monastery sometime between 1240 and 1253. After being received by a solemn procession, the visitor and his inspectors were

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<sup>20</sup> *Annales monastici*, ed. Henry R. Luard, 5 vols., Rolls Series 36 (London, 1864–69) 3:143, 147–8.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:178, 181; Stevenson, *Grosseteste*, 147–67.

<sup>22</sup> The *Rotuli Roberti Grosseteste episcopi Lincolnensis*, ed. F.N. Davis, Canterbury and York Society 10 (London, 1913), provides no evidence concerning his visitations of monastic houses.

<sup>23</sup> McEvoy, "Ecclesia sancta," 137–40; C.T. Hogan, "Robert Grosseteste, Pseudo-Dionysius and Hierarchy: A Medieval Trinity. Including an Edition of Grosseteste's Translation of, and Commentary on, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1991) 1:73–7.

brought before the entire community in the chapterhouse. Grosseteste would have stood before them, and began his visitation with just such a sermon. It was the sermon which would set the tone for the following days of inquiry.<sup>24</sup>

### *The exegetical features*

The *sermo ad religiosos*, begins with a pericope from Hosea: *Non est veritas, non est misericordia, non est sciencia Dei in terra*, after which Grosseteste identifies the significance of the term *terra* (1-2).<sup>25</sup> In fact, it is the implicit meaning of heaven, which is in contradistinction to the reality of earth, that captures his attention. He notes that according to a moral exegesis, the term *terra* can refer to the active life, whereas the term *celum* signifies the contemplative life (3). The definition of earth becomes in essence the apophatic definition of heaven.

Grosseteste builds on this signification by pointing out that heaven also appropriately signifies the regular life of contemplatives, so that what one may attribute to one person, one can also apply to a whole community. Herein lies Grosseteste's ideal of the monastic life: a community of contemplatives ought to reflect and imitate the spiritual heavens. Was this not, Grosseteste asks, exactly what Benedict had tried to do? Was he not constructing a spiritual tabernacle in human beings? Hence, is it not important that monastic communities understand what they are to imitate? In order that his audience may know what those structures are, Grosseteste aims to describe the various features of the celestial bodies (4).

Grosseteste provides two main ways in which one could order these features, which not surprisingly are nine in number. One way is to divide them into the theoretical and practical features. In this way, the first three principles reflect the essential features of the monastic life, and the remaining six compose the practical

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<sup>24</sup> On the procedure see C.R. Cheney, *Episcopal Visitations of Monasteries in the Thirteenth Century* (Manchester, 1931) 59-103. There is some corroborative evidence that Grosseteste followed this procedure: *Annales monastici*, ed. Luard, 3:147: *in singulis capitula generalia celebravit et sermonem fecit et constitutiones promulgavit*.

<sup>25</sup> Reference to the sermon will be made according to the paragraph number, in parenthesis, of the edition which follows in the APPENDIX.

realities (5-6). The second way is to consider the points of reference, and this would mean grouping the nine principles in three triads (17). The following analysis is based on the second *divisio textus*, because it best captures Grosseteste's intention. These three triads concern the principles of, the promises to, and the practices in the community.

*The principles of the community*

In the first triad, Grosseteste focuses on the principles or essential features of a monk. He notes that first of all members of a community should be pure in substance, that is free from all worldly possessions. He does note that this principle cannot be understood as absolute poverty, because the community has the responsibility to care for its members. Instead, his concern is that a monk should not be encumbered by possessions by which desire may impudently proceed through hope (presumably for more goods), or to increase insolently through praise of one's own goods. Grosseteste draws the example from the Maccabean narrative, where Matthias and his sons leave all that they have and flee to the mountains. The choice is clear: to enter a monastery is to leave all mundane goods behind and flee to the contemplation of the divine law of God. Indeed, the very act of tonsure, the visible sign of vocation, was a sign of abdication of possessions (7-8).

The burdens of ownership do not end with a simple renunciation of property. It is the mind-set of the world that the monk is in fact fleeing, where the fear of immense troubles and the suffering of absent pleasures can produce an unordered love. The monastic community ought to be composed of perspicacious members, who are not constrained by the fears and cares of the outside world. Instead by the tranquil opening of the mind they are to be prepared for the reception of divine grace, which they can use to further the health of the community. The focus of the monk must shift from his temporal concerns prior to conversion to the life of the community (9).

Hence, it is more than just the simple state of poverty that concerns Grosseteste.<sup>26</sup> This echoes a point made by Pseudo-Dionysius

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<sup>26</sup> In *Dictum* 94, Grosseteste carefully examines the meaning of wealth and poverty, concluding that the essential feature of true Christian poverty was not

in the sixth chapter of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. In his reflection on the rite of the consecration of monks, Pseudo-Dionysius notes that there should be

the renunciation of all activities and of all phantasies which could lead to a distracted living indicates that most completely wise monastic life in which flourishes the understanding of those unifying commandments.<sup>27</sup>

This wise monastic life, which Grosseteste renders as "the most perfect monastic philosophy" (*perfectissimam monachorum philosophiam*)<sup>28</sup>, must by consequence mean that a monastic community must be separated from the many things which could distract them from their union with the One. Again, at the heart of the matter is concupiscence. Noting the significance of the signing of the cross on the new monk in the rite, Grosseteste writes:

Just as Christ died on the cross according to the flesh, so it is appropriate that the monk be mortified according to all carnal desires ...<sup>29</sup>

The focus for the monk should not be on the corporeal realities of human experience.

Instead, their focus should be on spiritual realities, which is Grosseteste's third principle. Monks ought to be illuminated by the sun, moon, and stars according to their proper movement in the heavens. Here, Grosseteste provides a wonderful allegorical description of the heavens. The sun, as the greater light, is the light of contemplation, whereas the moon is the light of speculation since it is really illuminated by the sun. As for the stars, they are the powers of sensation since they shine through the spiritual understanding of all things (10).

Typically, Grosseteste does not waste the opportunity to push a signification as far as it could go. He notes that these celestial

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to desire goods. Concupiscence was the real sin, according to Grosseteste, and not the actual production and ownership of wealth: Durham, Dean and Chapter Library MS A.III.12, fols. 3ra-rb. See also Elizabeth M. Streitz, "Robert Grosseteste: *Commentarius in Psalmos* 1-xxxvi," (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1995) 68-74.

<sup>27</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, in trans., Colm Luibheid, *Pseudo-Dionysius: the Complete Works*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York, 1987) 6.3.2, 247.

<sup>28</sup> Hogan, "Grosseteste's Commentary on *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*," chap. 6, 2.802.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 6, 2.808.

elements undergo tremendous changes in prophecy: the sun becomes darkened, the moon turns to blood, and the stars fall from the sky. These apocalyptic warnings appear to becoming true in our day, he states. Does not the sun become darkened when the splendid wisdom of religious minds are converted into the abyss of superfluous occupations of worldly business and the cares of this age? Does not the moon turn to blood when monks are more concerned for their own blood relations than with their own prudence? Do not the stars fall from the sky when monks seek after the dignities of fallen honor and the powers of temporal authority? Should they not instead denounce these obsessions, in light of these prophecies (10)?

It is clear that these three principles are bound up together in the one essential feature of the monastic life: contemplation of God. In his commentary on the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, Grosseteste notes that monks are called to a life of contemplation, which is characterized by its indivisible focus on the singular nature of God, which leads to a divine union with the One. They have to be free of the various appetites and the divisible things of this world. The Fathers had named a monk as a *therapeutas*, Grosseteste writes, that is one who serves God alone.<sup>30</sup> In his paraphrase of a Greek work on monasticism which he sent to the monks of Bury St Edmunds, he notes that the Greek etymology of *monachus* reveals that the monastic life focuses on singular prayer. This definition also points to the desire of a monk. He notes

that he might pray without ceasing in the spirit, giving thanks in all things. So that he may do this in purity, by which it is appropriate, it is necessary that he be alone, that is separated in spirit and in mind by which he prays and sings from the turmoil of phantasies; idle and useless cognitions; unclean, noxious, impure, and unordered desires—so that he may be purified from all worldly and transitory things.<sup>31</sup>

### *The promises to the community*

To end with these three principles would have provided, at least in an encapsulated form, Grosseteste's conception of the principles of the monastic vocation. However, as bishop his aim was to visit a

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 6, 2.795.

<sup>31</sup> Grosseteste, *Epistolae*, ed. Luard, no. 57, 174 (see note 3).

community, and that related to some practical realities that were manifest in addition to poverty and contemplation. His next triad focuses on how a community of contemplatives ought to function together based on the promises they had made.

It is also at this point that Grosseteste comes closest to providing any commentary on the Rule of Benedict, as this triad concerns obedience, conduct and stability. In Chapter 58 of the Rule, Benedict states that initiates who have stood firm during the community's initial harsh treatment, ought to make a public promise concerning stability, proper conduct (*conversatio morum*) and obedience.<sup>32</sup> Grosseteste addresses these promises in reverse order. He first notes that it is important for there to be present a connection of salvific obedience in the community. This must happen through a desire for voluntary compliance with the will of the superior, so that there would be free and full obedience without any murmuring. By the way Grosseteste phrases this point, he saw obedience to the abbot much in the same way St Benedict had: it held the community together. If it did not exist, what would stop individuals from destroying it by insurrection, open quarrels and confusion (11)?

Another binding promise of the community was proper conduct, or what Grosseteste calls the hollowness of compassion. The phrase *concavum compassionis*, reflects Grosseteste's concern that proper moral behavior has communal implications. In the first place, by employing the image of hollowness, he asserts that proper compassion begins with humility. We see this in the prologue to his commentary on the Psalms. There he notes that among the many signifying features of the Psalterium instrument, it was concave because concavity was a type for humility.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, he broaches the role of compassion in the same commentary when he embarks on an analysis of the proper conduct of Christians. This appears in his comments on Psalm 100, which concerns the perfect conduct of a believer who has an active faith (*fides diligens*). This conduct is composed of four parts: compassion, correct judgment, penitential discipline, and contemplation.

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<sup>32</sup> *RB*, chap. 58.17, 269.

<sup>33</sup> Streitz, "Grosseteste: *Commentarius*," 28, 39–40 (*versio altera*); see also James R. Ginther, "The *Super Psalterium* of Robert Grosseteste: A Scholastic Psalms Commentary as a Source for Medieval Ecclesiology," (Ph.D. diss. University of Toronto, 1995) 146–9.

Notably compassion begins with a man lamenting about his own failings. In this context, Grosseteste is focusing on the larger Christian community, but his comments do shed light on the relationship between conduct and compassion.<sup>34</sup> The conduct of a person ought to have some impact on the community of which he is part. Grosseteste states in the visitation sermon that compassion requires one to weep with the weeping and rejoice with the rejoicing, and thus it embraces the whole community (12).

The consequence of this must be stability, or else the monk would find himself overwhelmed by the emotional demands of communal life. This is a departure from St Benedict who had originally intended that this concept be understood as a life-commitment of the initiate to one community. For Grosseteste, stability must be rendered as patience, a virtue which prevents the monk from becoming completely broken by the abbot's authority or exasperated by the misery of his inferiors (13).

### *The practices in the community*

In the final triad, we return to the exemplar of the celestial heavens, but we do not return to the theoretical features of the monastic life. Instead, Grosseteste concludes by outlining the three principles of the practice in the community which should draw its movements from the celestial world. There is a significant shift in the text as Grosseteste changes from the present tense to the future, as if to indicate the anagogical reality of the monastic life. In the first place, the community ought to realize that temporal ownership is a means to an end, and not an end in itself. Like the heavens, which move from right to left, the community begins with the hope of future spiritual goods, progressing through temporal ownership and will return to the final conversion of spiritual ownership. In this way, the monastery could legitimately own property, but its purpose had to be always in their thoughts (14).

Secondly, celestial mechanics provides the model of good management, which is a blend of flexibility and rigidity. Grosseteste's concern is that the monastic community might attempt to

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<sup>34</sup> Grosseteste, *Super Psalterium*, 100.2 (Bologna, Biblioteca Archiginnasio MS 987, fol. 169vb). See Ginther, "The *Super Psalterium* of Robert Grosseteste," 232–3.

enforce their rules in an inappropriate manner. Sometimes they are too rigorous in discipline, or they are too lax. Other times they are eager for the younger members of the community to take the lead, whereas at other times these same member refuse to follow. Grosseteste states that instead of all these aberrations, the spiritual circuit of the contemplative life must be governed according to the correct rules (15).

This principle reflects yet another idea Grosseteste had harvested from Pseudo-Dionysius. In his analysis of the idea of hierarchy, he listed the three basic features: power, knowledge, and operation. To this he added what was implied, namely love.<sup>35</sup> This additional element emphasized that it was the correct order of activity that secured the opportunity for all members to participate in the hierarchy. If the hierarchy was to function properly, each and every position had to understand its function in relation to the other members. Hence, either usurping a superior's position or refusing to follow the superior's lead ran contrary to the natural order of things, and endangered the entire hierarchy. The operations of the heavens demonstrate how well things functioned when everything operates in its correct place. A human hierarchy functions properly when it reflects the celestial hierarchy in this way. The activities were important, but so was the actual order of persons involved.<sup>36</sup>

The responsibility of leadership could not be avoided nor handed over to someone else, and this is the final principle of this triad. The spiritual men of the community could not shirk their responsibilities of correction and reconciliation. They had to be the ones to retain the example of celestial management. Specifically leaders were to ensure that the fury that often accompanied rebukes not endanger the tranquillity of the community (16).

### *Conclusion*

The implications of these principles of the monastic life could be severe. The first triad spoke to two major problems in medieval

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<sup>35</sup> James R. Ginther, "The Ecclesiology of Robert Grosseteste: A Survey of Some Relevant Texts," *Scintilla* 8 (1991) 25–44, at 39–40.

<sup>36</sup> See Grosseteste's sermon, *Ex rerum initiarum*, in Gieben, "Robert Grosseteste on Preaching," 140.



monasticism, that of proprietary monks and simoniacal entry into a monastery. With respect to the former, Grosseteste's attitude toward material ownership echoed the concerns of the Statutes propagated by Pope Gregory IX in 1235 and 1237 for the Benedictine order.<sup>37</sup> In the section on property, Gregory had stated any monk found in possession of property was to be solemnly excommunicated. If it were discovered after the monk's death that he had property, he was to be interred without any burial service. This included a prohibition to use silver or gold cups, or any decorated utensils.<sup>38</sup> A little later, Gregory states:

No one unless he absolutely needs it in the administration of his office, shall have a chest provided with a lock except with the abbot's permission. And as often as the abbot shall request it, he shall hand over the key and if has anything beyond that required for his office, he shall be deemed a possessor of property to that extent.<sup>39</sup>

In light of this legislation, Grosseteste's inspection of Ramsey Abbey, where he broke open locked chests and smashed decorated cups, seems far less outrageous than Matthew Paris would have had us believe.

Simony was also a matter of Grosseteste's intention, and it is appropriate to these first three principles since it concerned the treatment of ecclesiastical offices as property. In 1239, Grosseteste obtained a mandate from Gregory IX which allowed him to institute a uniform policy for simoniacal monks. It allowed him to transfer unilaterally the guilty monk to another monastery where he was enjoined to follow a strict penitential discipline. If that transfer proved difficult, the alternative was to have the monk readmitted and placed in the lowest place of the choir, provided that the initial payment could be recovered and given to the poor.<sup>40</sup>

This first triad also speaks to a criticism Matthew Paris hurls at Grosseteste, namely that he proceeded in his visitations of monasteries under the influence of the mendicant model.<sup>41</sup> Grosseteste's

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<sup>37</sup> See Cheney, *Episcopal Visitations*, 72. The statutes are printed in an appendix of *Registrum visitationum archiepiscopi Rothomagensis*, ed. T. Bonnis (Rouen, 1852) 643–8. The statutes are also printed in Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Luard, 6:235–47.

<sup>38</sup> *Registrum*, ed. Bonnin, 644–5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 645; translation from *The Registry of Eudes of Rouen*, trans. Sydney M. Brown (New York, 1964) 742.

<sup>40</sup> Stevenson, *Grosseteste*, 153.

<sup>41</sup> Cheney, *Episcopal Visitations*, 35.

severity, then, was due to his attempt to remake St Benedict's community in the image of the way of St Francis. Yet this triad of principles makes it clear that this was not the case. Grosseteste is not advocating a position of absolute poverty, nor is he suggesting that the contemplative life be replaced with the model of the mixed life. Rather, he saw a necessary role for monasteries in the church: they were the perfected order in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which ought to be constructed in manner that allowed them to pursue their program of contemplation and union with God.

As for the second triad which concerned the promises made to the community, we cannot make any specific claims. We do know that Grosseteste was insistent that where possible each member of the house should be examined, and this was one of the reasons why Grosseteste appeared with such a large entourage of inspectors.<sup>42</sup> Grosseteste's reliance upon secular inspectors often aroused anger, not to mention his attempts at times to turn an inspection into an official inquisition. Nonetheless, his concern appears to have been that each member was fulfilling their communal responsibilities to their fullest.

The last triad related directly to the administration of the community. On more than one occasion, Grosseteste deposed various administrators in monasteries for their maladministration. In this respect, Grosseteste was most feared since the evidence often weighed heavily against the accused. In 1249, the very announcement of Grosseteste's impending visitation caused the cellarer of Dunstable and the prior of Caldwell to flee their monasteries for the safety of the Cistercian abbey at Merivale, where Grosseteste's influence ended at the monastery gate.<sup>43</sup> Grosseteste's conflict with the Abbey of Bardney in 1243, the event which led to his excommunication by the Canterbury monks *sede vacante*, began with a problem of the abbey's accounting procedures. Grosseteste considered it his right to investigate, though this was not technically a visitation, since it concerned the health of the community as a whole.<sup>44</sup>

More importantly, it was the responsibility of leaders that concerned the bishop of Lincoln. Grosseteste began his episcopal

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 38, 50–1.

<sup>44</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Luard, 4:245–8, 257–9.

relationship with the monastic houses of Lincoln by deposing seven abbots and four priors in 1236. To one of these abbeys he advised them that they should be careful in their election of the new abbot. They had to ensure that he had the correct qualifications. He notes that when one selects someone to care for a herd of swine, they ensure he can fulfill the task. Surely, he queries, your souls are more valuable than pigs?<sup>45</sup> The responsibilities of leadership was the basis of success of a monastic community. They had a greater burden to bear than other members of the community, and Grosseteste called them to answer for it.

Grosseteste's severe examination of monastic leaders was an extension of his vision of his own leadership. In his commentary on the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, he capitalizes on the relationship Pseudo-Dionysius constructs between the order of contemplatives and the hierarchy. While the monastic order is the higher of the three orders of initiates in the church, Grosseteste argues that this does not mean that it is greater or equal to the sacerdotal order, particularly in its episcopal manifestation. Instead, the bishop as the hierarchy is the one who perfects the monastic order.<sup>46</sup> If a monastery's success were dependent upon its own leadership, it was even more dependent upon the bishop fulfilling his own responsibilities as the diocesan hierarchy. Grosseteste was convinced that he would be called to account for this at the last judgment, and this conviction informed his investigations of the monasteries of Lincoln.

In many respects, Grosseteste's visitation of monastic houses did reflect his examination of the secular features of his diocese. However, the monastic life had its own unique mandates and principles. In his sermon to the religious, he outlined his view of the monastic life, so that his visitation proceeded on a clearly rational basis. Not everyone shared his outlook, nor the methods of inspection they generated. As in many other cases in the life and works of Robert Grosseteste, that would never stop him from carrying out what he considered to be his proper duties as bishop of Lincoln.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Stevenson, *Grosseteste*, 152–3; Grosseteste, *Epistolae*, ed. Luard, no. 85, 268–70.

<sup>46</sup> Hogan, "Grosseteste's Commentary on *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*," chap. 6, 2.796, 805.

<sup>47</sup> I am indebted to Sr Maura O'Carroll of Heythrop College, London, who graciously provided her comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

## APPENDIX

The edition of Sermon 68 is based on a single manuscript: Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.38, fols. 38r-39r. The College Sub-librarian, Alison Sproston, kindly provided photocopies from the microfilm. Some emendations were required in order to render an intelligible text. Pointed brackets <> indicate editorial additions in the text. The footnotes indicate when a word or phrase has been altered, as well as scribal corrections. All abbreviations have been silently expanded. While the edition reflects the manuscript's orthography, punctuation has been rendered according to modern taste and usage.

## Roberti Lincolniensis Sermo ad religiosos

## &lt;Sermo 68&gt;

1[38r] *Non est ueritas, non est misericordia, non est sciencia Dei in terra maledictum, mendacium, homicidium, furtum et adulterium inundauerunt et sanguinis sanguinem tetigit.*<sup>1</sup>

2 Hec terra, que uacua est ueritate et misericordia et Dei sciencia, numquid est terra quam calcamus? Non quia hoc non habet in se nisi ueritatem, et ueritate plena est quia plena est maiestate et gloria Domini. Et ubi est glorie Domini plenitudo et eius maiestatis, non potest esse uacuitas ueritatis. Numquid illa terra est terra uiuentium que alia est ab ista quam inhabitamus que est terra morientium?<sup>2</sup> Nequaquam: ipsa enim terra uiuentium soliditas est celestis habitationis, que non potest esse a ueritate uacua. Cum in celo (quod est terra uiuentium) permaneat, Domine, ueritas tua, non potest hoc terra esse aliquid predictorum.

3 Consueuit non numquam secundum moralem intelligentiam per terram actiue uite depressio, per celum uero contemplatiue celsitudo designari, et precipue solutio regularis constitutionis sanctitate in collegiorum unitate Christo famulantium, in quibusquam hoc presens sanctum uestrum collegium quasi ab exordio sue consitutionis et conuersacionis sanctitate et opinionis integritate preclare habitum est et laudabile ad ipsum, quasi ad unum pro omnibus conuerto sermonem. Cui enim conuenientius quam huic sancte congregationi celorum spiritualium ex proprietatibus nomen assignatur et propter sublimem diuinorum misteriorum contemplacionem et propter ipsius cum ciuibus celestibus famulare contubernium et propter cor unum et animam unam multitudinis credentium<sup>3</sup> et propter ex mentis iocunditate in psalmis, ymnis, et canticis gloria<sup>4</sup> suauitate uitalem laudem indefesse procedentem.

<sup>1</sup> Os. 4:1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Roberti Grosseteste, *Dictum* 21 (London, British Library MS Royal 6.E.v, fol. 14va).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Act. 4:32.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Eph. 5:19.

4 Celi etiam nullum propter celorum corporalium proprietates eidem non negabitur que super seculares populos altitudinis immensitate sublimata eosdem et cari<tatis> feruore uiuificat, et lumine ueritatis illustrat, et tonitruo fame laudabilis excitat, et uirtutis excellentis fulgure exagitat. Nonne ergo in hac spiritali congregacioni et sibi si<m>ilibus per beatum Benedictum Spiritu sancto in montem contemplacionis sublimatum qui, secundum exemplar sibi monstratum in celestibus, tabernaculum Dei construxit in hominibus? (Ille igitur dominicus sermo ad beatum Iob uidetur impletus.) Numquid nosti ordinem celi et pones rationem eius in terra? Vt igitur in hoc celo qualiter congregatos conuersari oporteat in celestibus, innotescat istorum celorum corporalium uirtutes uarias secundum quas in suis operacionibus suas influunt bonitates creaturis sub rectis: et ideo per Spiritus sancti benignitatem, secundum presentis uersus sententiam, precipue firmatas de innumeris paucis<sup>5</sup> humanis sensibus manifestis proponamus in medium.

5 Sunt<sup>6</sup> autem quoad uirtutes essentie in substantia puri, in natura perspicui, luminaribus maiori et minori et stellis ornati; quoad figuram, quoque ad exterius connexi, ad interius concaui, in situs idemptitate mansuri secundum motum nihilominus quod orbiculariter a dextro per sinistrum <mouet>.

6 Item, ad dextrum redeunt absque rigiditate quoque et flexibilitate perpetuo reuoluuntur in sui ordine<sup>7</sup> et moderamine, super permanentes sibi subiectum mundum inferiorem non fulmine dissipant, nec procella concutiunt, nec tranquillitatem inducunt. Ad imitationem igitur harum uirtutum in hiis celis corporalibus insigniri oportebit conuiatores<sup>8</sup> in celestis conuersacionis militiam.

7 Primum quidem ut sint secundum substantiam puri ab omnis (uide-licet mundialis rei) possessione et usu (praeter necessario et sollicitudine alieni), in quibus concupiscentia aut per spem progrediatur impudenter aut per gaudium gestiat insolenter. Ad exemplum eius de quo legitur in libro Macabeorum .ii.: *Fugit Mathathias in montem et filii eius et reliquerunt quaecumque habebunt in ciuitate.*<sup>9</sup> Declinantes spiritalium hostium seuitiam, caren<te>s scilicet mundi et diaboli relictis omnibus que habentur mundalibus, cum bonis operibus et eorum imitatoribus ad celsitudinem contemplacionis sublimen Dei legem emulantes confugiant. Propter quam rerum mundalium abdicacionum uiri religiosi in Canticis comparata sunt gregi tonsarum, quando beatus Bernardus illum locum exponens dicit, "Monachi tonsis ouibus comparantur qui reuera sunt tondi quibus nec corda nec corpora nec aliud mundanum relictum est."<sup>10</sup> Quam sit detestanda mundanarum rerum per amorem post religionis uotum emissum.

<sup>5</sup> paucos ms.

<sup>6</sup> Nota de proprietatibus celi in marg. ms.

<sup>7</sup> ordig ms.

<sup>8</sup> conuatores ms.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Macc. 2:28.

<sup>10</sup> Bernardi Claraeuellensis, *Sermones de diversis*, 93, in SBO 6.1:351, par.2, ll.1-2.

8 Anime incorporacio manifestatur per Achor quia de anathemate Ierico aliquibus clanculo sublati, etiam peccatum suum confitens, per diuinam sententiam ultimi supplicii multatus est dampnatione.<sup>11</sup> Per Ananiam quoque et Saphiram, qui propter semiplenam rerum mundalium renunciacionem et si sub apostolis humilitati sunt, presidentibus tamen illis celitus inprospecta morte percussi sunt omni.<sup>12</sup> Si sub tanta celestis sentencie distinctione uiris religiosus etiam sua, condamnatus, sunt interdicta, quid diceretur de hiis qui pauperibus loco patrum constituti eos rapinis calumpniis et concussionibus cum uiris sanguinum portionem ponentes assidue urgere non formidant? Quod si per beatum Johannem baptismatum mundane militie prohibetur urgentissime quam execandum in celesti militia uitium istud iudicabitur?

9 Secundo quoque secundum naturam perspicui ne per sui circa se inordinatum amorem, etsi a rebus exterioribus, absoluti aut timore immencium molestiarum constringantur, aut dolore absentium suauitatum perturbentur, quoniam secundum apostolum *perfecta caritas foras mittit timorem*.<sup>13</sup> *Tristitia seculi mortem operatur*.<sup>14</sup> Sed tranquilla mentis dilatacionem ad instar celestis perspicuitatis, ad suscepcionem diuinarum gratiarum preparentur et ad earundem transfusionem in alios adaptentur, iuxta sententiam beati Petri dicentis: *Vnusquisque sicut accepit gratiam in alterutrum illam administrantes sicut boni dispensatores multiformis gratia Dei*.<sup>15</sup>

10 Tertio autem necesse erit celos istos luminaribus maiori et minori et stellis cum fixione possessionis illustrari [38] uidelicet superiori ratione et inferiori et uirtutibus sensitiuis quod fit, cum ratio superior fulget uelut sol per contemplacionem incommutabilis ueritatis; ratio uero inferior uelut luna per speculacionem nature proprie ab ipso tamen sole illuminata; uirtutes uero sensitiue uelut stelle cum splendent per spirituales aliarum rerum cogniciones, istis, inquam, per omnia luce ueritatis refulgentibus et motis secundum ordinem rectitudinis.<sup>16</sup> Summopere autem<sup>17</sup> cauendum ne id uestris diebus accidat quasi<sup>18</sup> in signum tremendi iudicii Saluator in ewangelio comminatur, dicens: *Sol contenebrabitur, et luna non dabit splendorem suum, et stelle celi erunt decidentes*.<sup>19</sup> Quod quasi expressius per Johelem Dominus ait: *Sol conuertetur in tenebras et luna in sanguinem antequam ueniat dies Domini magnus et horribilis*.<sup>20</sup> Quodquam manifeste in nonnullis istis diebus uidemus impletum. Quid enim aliud est quam solem conuerti in tenebras cum preclara religiosarum mentium sapientia in tenebrosam abyssum superfluarum occupacionum, uidelicet negotiacionum, disceptacionum, computacionum quoque, et aliorum huius seculi sollicitudinum transmutatur? Quo uero luna non conuertitur

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Jos. 7:16–26.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Act. 5:1–11.

<sup>13</sup> 1 John 4:18.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Cor. 7:10.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Pet. 4:10.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Roberti Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron*, 5.20.1–3, 179.

<sup>17</sup> autem *add. interlin. ms.*

<sup>18</sup> quasi *bis ms.*

<sup>19</sup> Mark 13:24–25.

<sup>20</sup> Joel 2:31.

in sanguinem<sup>21</sup> cum proscripta earundem prudentia in carnis proprie desideria adimplenda et consanguineos secundum carnem promouendos intendit? Numquid etiam non stelle decidunt in terram<sup>22</sup> cum ipsarum uniuerse particulares cogniciones de caduci honoris dignitatibus et temporalis dominacionis potentatibus indefesse consulunt et disquirunt? Nonne si ipsi ueritati et prophetie ueritatis fides adhiberetur ista lugenda peruersitas et irreparabilis ruina nouissime diei uicinum aduentum denuntiant? Proinde Jeremiah propheta mala predicta planctu lamentabili persecutus ait: *Dispersi<sup>23</sup> sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omni platearum.*<sup>24</sup>

11 Quarto uero ad ea que superius oportet inesse gillositatem siue connexitatem salutaris obediencie per studium uoluntarie conformacionis cum superioris uoluntate ut sit liberis obedientia et penitus sine murmure. Si enim secundum Domini sententiam qui dixit *fratri suo racha reus erit concilio*,<sup>25</sup> quanta putas animaduersione<sup>26</sup> plectetur in iudicio qui si tamen fratri sed patri uice Dei presidenti, aut sonum susurracionis, aut apertam querimoniam, aut contradictiones, et contumelias intorquere non formidat? Vt autem aptius liqueat quam sit pernicio inobediencie supersticio, attendamus Saulem qui etiam sub specie pietatis Samuelis uoci non obtemperans et a regno deicitur et diuino iudicio irreuocabiliter reprobatur, dicente scriptura: *Melior est obedientia quam uictime et ascultare magis quam offerre adipem arietum quoniam quasi peccatum ariolandi est repugnare et quasi scelus ydolatre nolle adquiescere.*<sup>27</sup>

12 Quinto autem conauum compassionis inesse per amorem pium releuandi miserum a miseria cum studio coaptacionis sui ad miseros. Etiam fleat cum flentibus, gaudeat cum gaudentibus,<sup>28</sup> ut uniuersos quoquomodo sibi subditos in concauo miserie fouendo complectatur. Vt dicat cum Apostolo: *Quis infirmatur et ego non infirmor? Quis scandalizatur et ego non uror?*<sup>29</sup>

13 Sexto autem consequens est ut per pacienciam in possessionis sue stabilitate consistat ne aut per imperium superioris frangatur, aut per miseriam inferiorum exasperetur, quam sit autem emulanda huius uirtutis conseruacio. Per uerbum Deo liquet in ewangelio dicentis: *In paciencia enim possidebitis animas uestras.*<sup>30</sup> Et per beatum Iacobum quasi exponendo dicitur: *Paciencia autem opus perfectum habet ut sitis perfecti et integri in nullo deficientes.*<sup>31</sup> Paciencia enim, que diffinitur quid sit animi a molestiis inflexibilitas, anime perfeccionem conseruat in uirtutum magnitudine et eiusdem integritate in earundem neruo.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf Apoc. 6:12.

<sup>22</sup> Cf Apoc. 6:13.

<sup>23</sup> Mispersi *ms.*

<sup>24</sup> Lam. 4:1.

<sup>25</sup> Matt. 5:22.

<sup>26</sup> ad- *expung. ms.*

<sup>27</sup> 1 Kings 15:22-23.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Rom. 12:15.

<sup>29</sup> 2 Cor. 11:29.

<sup>30</sup> Luke 21:19.

<sup>31</sup> James 1:4.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Roberti Grosseteste, *Dictum* 18 (MS Royal 6.E.v, fols. 13ra-va).

14 Septimo uero oportebit inesse ad instar celestis reuolutionis a dextro futurorum bonorum per sinistram temporalium. Iterum, incessabili frequentia ad superna<m> conuersionem, ut sit de<sup>33</sup> utrisque inerrata cognicio de .eisdem interminatis gratiarum actionibus secundum id quod dicit Psalmista: *Circuiui*<sup>34</sup> *et immolaui*.<sup>35</sup>

15 Octauo quoque ad exemplar moderaminis in celesti circuiui<sup>36</sup> sine crassitudine<sup>37</sup>, flexibilitatis et rigiditatis equalitatem seruari<sup>38</sup> oportebit in prefata circuitione<sup>39</sup> quod quidam collegiatorum ostendentes se nondum plene boni suauitatem gustasse, in sui perniciem obseruare contempnunt qui modo rigorem disciplino supra propriam uirtutem extendit; modo etiam citra eandem longe consistunt; modo quoque fratres et prohibiti preire contendunt; modo uero eosdem quamuis stimulatī prosequi recusant qui uidit obiurgacionem scripture dicentis *stultus ut luna mutatur*,<sup>40</sup> non audiant. Spirituales uite contemplatiue circuiui secundum propriam uirtutem et fr<at>ernitatis conformitatem studeant moderari.

16 Nono denique per necessitatem erit uiris spiritualibus nec condemnationis fulgura, nec obiurgacionis procellas, nec reconciliationis tranquillitatem in inferiores transmittere, seruato tamen ad instar celestis moderaminis in mente eadem rectitudinis tranquillitate. Vt a passionibus furoris et concupiscentie alieni adimpleant in se quod dictum est de incommutabilis Dei sapientia curata<sup>41</sup> moderantis stabilisque manens dat curata<sup>42</sup> moueri.

17 Primus igitur huius nouemtarii uirtutum trinarius proprie refertur ad istorum moralium celorum subiectam; secundus uero ad suorum terminorum continentiam; tercius uero ad eorum transmutacionis operationem. Quare quidem non modicam requirunt inquisitionem? Cum dicat Boetius: "Ad instar celestis moderaminis omnem in accionibus nostris morum consistere comparacionem."<sup>43</sup> Isti igitur celi morales sint, supradictum est, et de celis literalibus *uerbo Domini celi firmati sunt et spiritu oris eius omnis uirtus eorum*.<sup>44</sup> Quamuis indiuisa sint opera trium personarum, producti sunt inesse per Patrem.

18 Quis enim ad tantam deiformitatis nisi per Patrem pertingit celsitudinem, cum dicit saluator: *Nemo uenit ad me nisi Pater meus traxerit eum*?<sup>45</sup> Per Filium quoque sunt dispoliti, cum discipulis regnum Dei predicaturis formam mundane renunciacionis contradidit. Per Spiritum quoque sanctum omnis uirtus eorum firmata est in die resurrectionis dominice ad iustificacionem. In sacro quoque die pentecosten ad

<sup>33</sup> cum de *ms.*

<sup>34</sup> Circuiui *ms.*

<sup>35</sup> Ps. 26:6.

<sup>36</sup> circuiui *ms.*

<sup>37</sup> massitudine *ms.*

<sup>38</sup> ob- *expung.* *ms.*

<sup>39</sup> circuitione *ms.*

<sup>40</sup> Eccli. 27:12.

<sup>41</sup> cirata *ms.*

<sup>42</sup> cirata *ms.*

<sup>43</sup> Non inventus est.

<sup>44</sup> Ps. 32:6.

<sup>45</sup> John 6:44.



confirmacionem corda replenit electorum. Quis enim ad tantam uirtutum celsitudinem mentes peccatorum sublimare<sup>46</sup> preualeret nisi illa que est foras ut mors dileccio et mundi et sui ipsius odium, et Dei et proximi amorem inuincibilem ipsos induceret, et a terrenitatis infirmitate ad diuinitatis immensitatem reuocaret? Vt autem modus huius firmacionis quomodo insinuetur sciendum quod spiritus sanctus et dicta dileccio siue caritas Dei diffusa in cordibus uestris. Idem esse creduntur qui menti infusus<sup>47</sup> humane eidem uirtutem largitur infinitam operationem cum ipsa faciens indiuiduam—sicut solaris <lucis> radius l39rlcum inperspicuum tinctum illabitur, colorem perspicui sibi incorporando, quasi eodem induitur, et secundum sui ipsius diffusionem dictum colorem secum diffundit, indiuisa cum ipso operatione<sup>48</sup>; licet in morali incessu similem tincturam perficiens quandam similitudinem et si longissime differentem Spiritus sancti amorem naturalem boni in libero arbitrio, quasi induentis pretendens.

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<sup>46</sup> -t *expung.* ms.

<sup>47</sup> *corr ex.* effusus ms.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Roberti Grosseteste, *De iride*, ed. Ludwig Baur, *Die Philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, Texte und Untersuchungen 9 (Münster, 1912) 77; et *ibid.*, *De colore*, ed. Baur, 78–9.

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**PART SEVEN**

**BENEDICTINE PREACHING IN ENGLAND**



## BENEDICTINE SERMONS: PREPARATION AND PRACTICE IN THE ENGLISH MONASTIC CATHEDRAL CLOISTERS

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There is no reference to preaching in the Rule of Benedict, and among English Benedictines of the later middle ages only a few were distinguished for their public proclamation of the gospel. Nevertheless, some of the major black monk houses, notably the cathedral priories, possessed impressive collections of sermons and of sermon related materials. Many of these volumes of sermons would have been unsuitable for the daily meditative reading prescribed for the monk as they were outline or summary sermons so abbreviated as to have proved indigestible for private consumption. Why, then, did the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, Durham, and Worcester, to name the three most striking examples, accumulate such extensive collections to which, if we may judge by the number of marginal annotations, they had frequent resort? The most likely answer is that these volumes were consulted by the monks in preparing their preaching assignments, for the evidence of monastic participation in this activity is not lacking although it may seem hardly sufficient to warrant such large-scale acquisition.

We shall be better equipped to examine the contents of the monastic libraries for their preaching manuals and aids to sermon preparation if we begin by identifying some of the monks who were appointed to preach and by noting when, where, and to whom they preached. First, we will observe them performing, and then look behind the performance in order to attempt a partial reconstruction of the research and study facilities with which they were provided. This being our limited purpose we may dispense with the question of the relationship between the black monk and the pastoral function of preaching, about which there were opposing views from the earliest times, while questioning in passing the need to seek justification at any particular time for the monks' exercise of pastoral duties.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Ursmer Berlière, "L'exercice du ministère paroissial par les moines

*Preaching in practice*

The obituaries of four monks of Christ Church Canterbury pay homage to the renown of the deceased as preachers. Edward Bockyng D.Th., who was executed in 1534 for his connection with Elizabeth Barton, "the holy maid of Kent", was described as a *predicator egregius*, as were William Hadley I, D.Th. (†1500), and John Langdon II, D.Th. (†1496); Henry Henfeld, B.Th. (†1396) was praised as a *predicator maximus verbi dei*.<sup>2</sup> Bockyng, Hadley, and Langdon served as wardens of Canterbury College, the house of studies for Christ Church monks at Oxford, and Bockyng preached the university sermon on Ash Wednesday 1514. A Winchester monk who was completing his doctoral studies in theology at Oxford occupied the same pulpit on Easter day 1528; his name was William Basyng, the fourth monk by that name and the last prior.<sup>3</sup>

Scattered throughout the episcopal registers the evidence of monastic preaching occurs in the form of the requisite licenses, often specifying the conditions to be observed. Four Ely monks, for example, who were students at Cambridge in 1415 were authorized to preach in any church appropriated to their cathedral monastery. Similarly, three Christ Church monk students received licenses to preach in Canterbury diocese in 1486.<sup>4</sup> Although St Wulstan's vigorous defense of monastic sermons in the late eleventh century was reported by his biographer, reference to the regular involvement of Worcester monks in preaching first appears two centuries later in the form of a papal license to the prior and convent. Dated

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dans le haut moyen-âge," *Revb* 39 (1927) 227–50, 340–64, where the evidence is largely derived from French sources. See also Margaret Jennings, "Monks and the *Artes Praedicandi* in the time of Ranulf Higden," *Revb* 86 (1976) 119–20 and Eugene J. Crook and Margaret Jennings, "Grading Sin: a Medieval English Benedictine in the *Cura Animarum*," *American Benedictine Review* 31 (1980) 335–45.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Greatrex, *Biographical Register of the English Cathedral Priories of the Province of Canterbury, c.1066–1540* (Oxford, 1997) [hereafter cited as *BRECP*] under the names, except for the reference to William Hadley I which is in William G. Searle, comp., *List of the Deans, Priors and Monks of Christ Church Monastery*, Cambridge Antiquarian Society 34 (1902) 188.

<sup>3</sup> As William Kingsmill he became the first dean of the new foundation in 1541, *BRECP*.

<sup>4</sup> See *BRECP* under Henry Madyngle, John Stunteney, Edmund Walsingham, and John Yaxham (Ely); William Chartham III, Richard Copton, and Robert Eastry (Canterbury).

January 1289/90 it gave permission to monks competent in theology to give sermons in public.<sup>5</sup> Some fifteen years later the abbot president of the Benedictine general chapter wrote to the Worcester prior urging him to appoint a learned monk to preach and to teach as had been the custom in former days.<sup>6</sup> In 1309 Bishop Reynolds informed the prior that he was issuing indulgences to all penitent laity hearing the monks who were sent to preach "in whatsoever place in our diocese you or they shall think good".<sup>7</sup> The encouragement to frequent monastic churches and other places where monks preached was not unusual in the early fourteenth century. The Durham priory archives include over ninety original charters of indulgence granted by bishops of the diocese dating from 1277.<sup>8</sup> In 1312 the monks of St Cuthbert were described as *aptos ad proponendum ... verbum Dei* by Bishop Kellaw whose indulgence was for all who went to hear them preach the gospel in the cathedral church; in the 1340s Bishop Bury commended the monks as not only *aptos* but *ad lucrificationem animarum utiles* and extended his indulgence to those who heard a monk expound the word of God to the general public [*publice*] or to a select gathering [*in privato*].<sup>9</sup>

The connection between monastic preaching and university training is well known, for the church has always required its ministers to be well informed in matters of faith and doctrine. Until the twelfth century, however, learning was largely confined to the cloister where alone were to be found well stocked libraries for the use of the monastic community, while the attached almonry schools offered elementary education to a few fortunate young

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<sup>5</sup> William of Malmesbury, *The Vita Wulstani*, ed. Reginald Darlington, Camden Society 3rd series (London, 1928) 13–4; W. Bliss, C. Johnston, J. Twemlow et al, eds., *Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Papal Letters* (London, 1894) 1:510.

<sup>6</sup> See Joan Greatrex, "Benedictine Monk Scholars as Teachers and Preachers in the Later Middle Ages: Evidence from Worcester Cathedral Priory," *Monastic Studies* 2 (1991) 213–25, especially 214.

<sup>7</sup> Rowland A. Wilson, ed., *The Register of Walter Reynolds, Bishop of Worcester, 1308–1313*, Worcester Historical Society (Worcester, 1927) 6.

<sup>8</sup> Durham Dean and Chapter Muniments, 1.13 Pont. 1–14, 2.13 Pont. 1–13, Misc. Ch. 747–831, 1497–1524, and 7082a–b.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas D. Hardy, ed., *Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense. The Register of Richard de Kellawe, Lord Palatine and Bishop of Durham, 1314–1316*, 4 vols, Rolls Series 62 (London, 1873–8) 2:1139; George W. Kitchin, ed., *Richard D'Aungerville, of Bury. Fragments of His Register and Other Documents*, Surtees Society (Durham, 1910) 119:19–20.



boys. During this and the following century the remarkable expansion in population and material prosperity across western Europe was accompanied by the burgeoning of a new intellectual outlook which sought to rework the entire corpus of classical and Christian learning into a universal synthesis. Cathedral schools were initially in the forefront of this movement but were superseded by the nascent universities that grew out of the scholarly communities congregating around renowned teachers in centers like Paris and, later, Oxford. From their earliest days the Franciscans and Dominicans were active in university circles and, on their arrival in England in the 1220s, they made their way to Oxford and Cambridge where they soon became prominent as teachers.<sup>10</sup> The Benedictines first appeared on the scene in the 1270s when the prior and convent of Durham decided to send their most promising monks to Oxford.<sup>11</sup> At their general chapter in 1277 the black monks of the southern province of Canterbury passed a resolution to provide an Oxford base for a select group of monk students from their communities. This set in motion the joint project which was to become Gloucester Hall and which was supported by all the monastic houses with the exception of Durham and Christ Church, Canterbury.<sup>12</sup>

Among the earliest residents in Gloucester Hall were the Worcester monks John de Arundel and William de Grymeley in 1292/3, along with an unnamed Norwich monk, possibly Geoffrey de Totyngton who is known to have been there in 1295/6.<sup>13</sup> With rare exceptions, for the next two-and-a-half centuries the cathedral priories and the major Benedictine monasteries were consistent in maintaining their presence at the university. The motives for approving periods of absence for university study were not career orientated, however, but strictly practical. It was not the pursuit of academic qualifications that concerned Benedictine superiors but the necessary competence to be achieved in

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<sup>10</sup> See C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars, the Impact of the early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London, 1994) Chapter 7.

<sup>11</sup> R. Barrie Dobson, "The Black Monks of Durham and Canterbury Colleges: Comparisons and Contrasts," in *Benedictines in Oxford*, eds. Henry Wansbrough OSB and Anthony Maret-Crosby OSB (London, 1997) 66–7.

<sup>12</sup> Joan Greatrex, "From Cathedral Cloister to Gloucester College," in *Benedictines in Oxford*, 48–60.

<sup>13</sup> BRECP under the names.

preaching and teaching the word of God, a purpose expressed in their declaration that monks

[at Oxford or Cambridge] should study the art of presenting the word of God [in public] before others in order to become more efficient and well qualified in disputation and in preaching.<sup>14</sup>

There was no intention to dispute the friars' ascendancy in the faculty of theology, although the existence of tension on home ground is clearly indicated by the prior of Norwich in a letter (c.1357–63) to the prior of the monk students at Oxford. The reason for delaying Adam Easton's return to Oxford to complete his studies, he wrote, was that his presence was needed in Norwich to assist with time-honored preaching commitments in the cathedral, city, and diocese. The monks were accustomed to preach the word of God publicly without hindrance, according to the prior, until the arrival of the mendicants, who were now encroaching on their territory.<sup>15</sup>

In 1356, several years earlier, Easton's studies had been briefly interrupted by a summons to return to Norwich in order to preach on the vigil of the feast of the Assumption.<sup>16</sup> It seems to have been fairly common practice, at least for some of the cathedral priories, to recall monk students periodically for preaching purposes and, no doubt, for an evaluation of their progress. The monk precentor of Worcester, for example, regularly dispatched messengers and horses to Oxford to inform students of their preaching assignments and furnish them with the necessary transportation; because he paid for the traveling expenses we have the evidence on this obedientiary's account. We thus learn of the Worcester monks William Wytteley (in 1400/1), and Richard Barndesley (in 1419/20) and, from other similar accounts, of the Christ Church monks John Waltham (in 1498), and William Peckham (in 1521) being called home to preach.<sup>17</sup>

Other instances of monastic preaching in public are recorded at solemnities, festivals, and special occasions in the cathedral such

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<sup>14</sup> William Pantin, *Documents Illustrating the Activities of the General and Provincial Chapters of the English Black Monks, 1215–1540*, Camden Society, 3rd series, 3 vols (London, 1931–7) 2:75: *ibidem* [at Oxford or Cambridge] *addiscant aliis debite proponere verbum Dei, in disputando et predicando habiliores efficiantur ac etiam promptiores.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 3:28–9.

<sup>16</sup> *BRECP.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

as the election of a bishop or prior or the visitation of the monastic chapter. Robert Sutton II at Ely preached at Archbishop Wittlesey's visitation in July 1373 and Richard Swaffham to the cathedral congregation there on both Good Friday and Easter day 1488.<sup>18</sup> William Manydowne was appointed to give the sermon before the subprior, chapter, and assembled company in Winchester cathedral at the opening ceremony preceding the election of a prior in December 1524.<sup>19</sup> The Norwich monk student who, in June 1532 at an episcopal visitation, delivered a sermon on the text, *Estote ergo vos perfecti sicut et Pater vester caelestis perfectus est* (Matt. 5:48), was probably without guile; but, not surprisingly, he brought upon himself the indignation of some of the older brethren whose depositions accused him of snobbery and of sowing dissension in the community.<sup>20</sup> William Thornden of Christ Church gave the nave sermon in the cathedral on Good Friday 1460 and a sermon *ad populum* in the chapter house in 1469; at the latter, which was the occasion of the abjuration of a heretic, he explained true doctrine to the faithful.<sup>21</sup> Another indelicate text was chosen by a Rochester monk, John de Whytefeld; assigned to preach at the first visitation of Bishop Hamo de Hethe, prior before his election by the monastic chapter, he took as his theme, *Fratres tuos visitabis* (1 Kings 17:8) and reminded the bishop that he had been "*creatus et promotus*" by his brethren. It seems that, although Hethe did not interrupt the brash young monk, he wasted no time in announcing that he was visiting the chapter "*ut filii*" and was in no way obligated to the monks for promoting him.<sup>22</sup>

There is also sufficient evidence to suggest that monks were not infrequently called upon to carry out pastoral functions in parish churches in town and countryside. Their ministrations, which were most likely confined to the parish churches of which they were rectors or patrons, sometimes occurred when they were making supervisory rounds of their manors; at other times they may have used the manors as overnight resting places and stayed long enough to relieve the incumbent of delivering the Sunday sermon. Richard de Bromwych, Worcester monk and doctor of

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

theology, paid several visits to King's Norton between 1319/20 and 1334/5 and preached there on at least one occasion.<sup>23</sup> The Durham bursar's accounts of 1376/7 and 1389/90 refer to named monks preaching at several rural churches in the priory's possession; one of the monks was the bursar himself in the latter year and another was Robert Rypon who was a student at Durham College, Oxford and perhaps already a promising preacher.<sup>24</sup> During an uncertain number of years between 1373 and 1402 Bishop William Wykeham licensed at least two guestmasters of St Swithun's, Winchester, to administer the sacraments at Littleton where both church and manor were in this obedientiary's care; his responsibilities would certainly have included the preparation of sermons.<sup>25</sup>

The monks who were selected as cathedral preachers were, for the most part, university trained; in the examples given the only exception is Robert Sutton, although this conclusion is based on a lack of evidence to the contrary and is therefore no more than tentative. There is uncertainty as to the qualifications of some of those who preached in parish churches, the two St Swithun's monks for example; this is at least partly because the surviving Winchester obedientiary accounts often fail to record the names of the monk students at Oxford to whom they were paying pensions. However, it does seem clear that a period of university study was indeed fulfilling its purpose as the training ground for proficiency in the art of preaching, an art which Benedictines practiced when they were called upon to do so.

#### *Sermon preparation, texts and reference works*

For monks, the study of Scripture, with the aid of glosses, commentaries, and related reference works, would have taken place in the cloister as well as at the university.<sup>26</sup> I am concerned mainly

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> J.T. Fowler, ed., *Extracts from the Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham*, Surtees Society, 3 vols, (Durham, 1898–1901) 3:585, 596. The places where the monks preached were Aycliffe, Billingham, Heighington, [Kirk] Merrington, and St Hilda's Chapel, South Shields.

<sup>25</sup> BRECP under John Hyde and John Midelton.

<sup>26</sup> A requirement that monks were expected to come to the university equipped with a supply of books from their own libraries was stated in the constitutions of Benedict XII, David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 4 vols., (London, 1737) 2:597.

with the claustral book collections but will have occasion to refer to some of the volumes known to have been in the Durham and Canterbury college libraries. While there are a few references to books that were on loan from the cloisters to monks resident at Gloucester College, only four fifteenth-century volumes survive from among those donated to the permanent collection there. Unfortunately, nothing is known of any books that were once in the Benedictine hostels in Cambridge.

There is ample evidence that in the course of the twelfth century the English black monks kept abreast of the teachings and writings of the continental masters in the French cathedral and Paris schools; they were therefore acquainted with the latest developments in biblical exegesis and with the new aids to study which Beryl Smalley likened to a "text-book movement".<sup>27</sup> The abbots of Bury St Edmunds and St Albans were in touch with the abbey of St Victor when Richard of St Victor (†1173) was at the summit of his teaching career; Abbot Simon of St Albans, for example, wrote for copies of all those works of Hugh of St Victor (†1141), Richard's learned predecessor, that the St Albans library had not yet acquired.<sup>28</sup> Five of the cathedral priories are known to have possessed copies of Hugh's writings and two may have obtained them by or before about 1200. Durham had his *Sententiae* according to the earliest extant book list copied into a manuscript that has been dated as possibly late eleventh century;<sup>29</sup> his *De sacramentis* is found in the 1202 Rochester catalogue and his commentary on Genesis and other writings in twelfth-century hands was owned by Canterbury.<sup>30</sup> Hugh's gloss on the book of Job in a

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<sup>27</sup> Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1984) 51 [hereafter cited as Smalley, *Bible*].

<sup>28</sup> David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1966) 502-4.

<sup>29</sup> *Catalogi Veteres Librorum Ecclesiae Cathedralis Dunelm*, Surtees Society 1838 (1840) 3, [hereafter cited as *Cat. Vet. Lib.*]; the manuscript has been preserved as Durham Cathedral Ms B.iv.24 and has been dated as late eleventh century by Neil Ker, ed., *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain, a list of surviving books*, Royal Historical Society (London, 1964) 68. A *Sacramenta Hugonis* is listed in the earliest Durham catalogue and eight volumes are listed under the heading "Hugo" in the 1391 list, *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 8, 21.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Sharpe, ed., et al, *English Benedictine Libraries, the Shorter Catalogues*, Corpus of Medieval Library Catalogues, iv, British Library (London, 1996) B79.89, [hereafter cited as Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.*]; this Rochester volume survives in the Royal collection in the British Library as Ms 8 D.v\*. The Canterbury manuscript is now Cambridge, Trinity College Ms 23.

thirteenth-century copy belonged successively to two Norwich monks, Robert de Rothewell and John Marton. The early fourteenth-century inventory of Christ Church books at Canterbury includes over twenty volumes in which Hugh's treatises, sermons and his *Didascalicon* formed all or part of the contents.<sup>31</sup>

The writings of the early Fathers of the church were well represented in most of the cathedral monasteries, and in other Benedictine establishments, if we may judge by the selective lists of volumes in the *Registrum Anglie* which, admittedly, supplies only nineteen titles for Bath, and a mere six for Coventry, the two cathedral priories whose libraries have largely disappeared.<sup>32</sup> The biblical commentaries of, for example, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Bede, and Haymo of Auxerre were common and others like John Cassian, Origen, and Isidore of Seville probably only slightly less so. Among twelfth-century commentators were the two Anselms (Laon and Canterbury); the former's gloss of the whole Bible was unfinished at his death in 1117, but his gloss on the Psalms was owned by Coventry, Durham, Rochester, and Canterbury.<sup>33</sup> The Ely monks had at least two volumes of Andrew of St Victor's (†1175) Old Testament commentaries, as did Worcester; Norwich probably had one.<sup>34</sup> Peter Lombard (†1160)

<sup>31</sup> Montague R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge, 1903) [hereafter cited as James, *ALCD*], Eastr catalogue nos. 170, 171, 174-7, [?216], 222, 537, 542, 679, 698, 926, 952, 988, 1173, 1190, 1195, 1237, 1257, 1606, 1607. Some of these survive in, e.g., Cambridge, St John's College Ms 130, and Cambridge, Trinity College Mss 23 and 46. It should be noted that, because ownership inscriptions and dates of acquisition of manuscripts are often lacking, details of the provenance of many texts are unknown.

<sup>32</sup> Roger A.B. Mynors, Richard H. and Mary A. Rouse, *Registrum Anglie de Libris Doctorum et Auctorum Veterum*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, British Library (1991) [hereafter cited as Rouse, *Registrum*] item xiii, 317-8; item 125, 297-8.

<sup>33</sup> For Anselm of Laon see Smalley, *Bible* 50-1. The Coventry and Rochester copies are listed in Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* at B23.24 and B79.139; the Durham copy is in *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 8, and belonged to Prior Laurence (†1154). As for Canterbury, items [?787], 996, 997, 1005, 1015 in the Eastr catalogue, *Psalterium glosatum secundum Anselmum*, are almost certainly his.

<sup>34</sup> The Ely volumes are listed at B28.7 and B28.8 in Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.*; those pertaining to Worcester are *ibid.* B116.4 which was at Oxford in the mid-fifteenth century, and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Ms 217 which contains an anonymous *tractatus* or *expositio* on the books from Genesis to 11 Chronicles that M.R. James has ascribed to Andrew of St Victor in the *Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912) 1:516. Cambridge University Library, Ms Kk.2.8 is a Norwich manuscript containing the gloss of Matthew and Mark. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Ms 30, which includes Andrew on the

also produced a gloss on the Psalter, no less than ten copies of which are listed in the Canterbury catalogue of Prior Eastry; it also forms part of the contents of Ms F.47 still reposing in Worcester Cathedral Library.<sup>35</sup> With the Lombard's contemporary and namesake, Peter Comestor (†c.1179), we come to a veritable explosion of texts among the cathedral priories. His commentary on the Psalms, which was based on the Lombard's gloss, was at Rochester; so were his commentaries on the Pauline epistles.<sup>36</sup> But it was his *Historia scholastica* which became a best seller and earned him the title *magister historiarum*. Canterbury had at least thirteen copies in Prior Eastry's day, Durham an uncertain number, but four copies are today still to be found there and additional copies may be listed in the *Catalogi Veteres*.<sup>37</sup> Worcester had six, not all of them complete but all extant and still in their original home;<sup>38</sup> Rochester had four, one the gift of Bishop Hamo de Hethe; Coventry and Norwich, surprisingly, each had only one of which there is record.<sup>39</sup> This volume, sometimes also referred to as *Historie manducatoris*, came to be a standard work providing a continuous history from the creation account in Genesis to the Acts of the Apostles, a *sine qua non* for students, lecturers, and preachers alike. It was produced in a variety of forms, some abridged and some in volumes which also included other helpful material like the *Allegorie de veteri ac novo testamento* opposite which a note had been added in the Durham catalogue *bonus liber est*.<sup>40</sup> During his teaching career at Paris Stephen Langton, later archbishop of Canterbury (†1228), was concerned with the practical needs both of his students and of the many others whom he reached through his

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Heptateuch and the minor prophets, may also be a Norwich book; see *ibid.* 61.

<sup>35</sup> James, *ALCD*, Eastry catalogue nos. 854 (pt 1), 885 (pt 2), 867, 897 (pt 1), 898 (pt 2), 981, 985, 1019, 1023, 1044, 1075, 1206, 1337.

<sup>36</sup> Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B79.64, 79.68.

<sup>37</sup> James, *ALCD*, nos. 637, 722, 975, 1047, 1060, 1084 (owned by Nigel Wireker, *BRECP*, and now Cambridge, Trinity College Ms 342), 1171, 1181, 1208, 1219, 1340, 1619, 1651; Durham Cathedral Library Mss B.1.33 and 34, B.11.36, B.111.20 and in *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 18, 53, 54, and 65.

<sup>38</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.1, F.37, F.71, F.133, Q.2, Q.44.

<sup>39</sup> Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B79.105, London, British Library, Ms Royal 2 C.i; the copy bequeathed by Bishop Hethe is in *ibid.* B82.6, and another copy borrowed by the Dominican Bishop William de Bottlesham (1389–1400) is *ibid.* B83.3. The Coventry and Norwich volumes are also in *ibid.* B23.24 and B62.16 respectively.

<sup>40</sup> *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 94; the *bonus* may refer to the quality of the manuscript rather than to its contents.

highly regarded commentaries on many of the books of both the Old and New Testaments; copies of these soon found their way to Durham, Rochester, Worcester, and Canterbury.<sup>41</sup> Some of them were bound with his edition of the *Interpretationes nominum hebraicorum* of Jerome. The *Interpretationes*, however, was more frequently found separately or combined with a Bible. Norwich had one of the combined versions; Durham had at least five of them (two of which were at Oxford); Worcester had two copies without a Bible and Ely had one which still survives. Rochester had four, while Canterbury had eleven, two of them bound with Bibles.<sup>42</sup>

The thirteenth-century church came increasingly to recognize and to stress the importance of preaching and instruction as a major instrument in its ministry to the faithful at home rather than as primarily a mission directed toward heretics and infidels. The Rouses have commented that a popular demand for evangelical sermons is indicated by the relatively sudden appearance of large numbers of unauthorized, itinerant, and often heterodox preachers; the needs of this receptive audience among the nominally faithful laity could not be adequately supplied without an increase of training among the clergy.<sup>43</sup> The new range of tools or

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<sup>41</sup> The Durham *Cat. Vet. Lib.* lists several, for example, four copies of his *Summa Ecclesiasticum*, 90; his *Expositio literalis* is in Durham Cathedral Ms A.III.26, and other Old Testament commentaries are in *ibid.* Ms A.I.9 etc. The Rochester copy of some of Langton's glosses is now London, British Library, Ms Royal 4 A.xvi; his commentaries on Kings and the minor prophets were among the books taken to Oxford by the Worcester monk, John Lawerne, in the mid-fifteenth century, Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B116.12. The Eastry catalogue at Canterbury lists many of Langton's *Moralia*.

<sup>42</sup> The Norwich combined Bible and *Interpretationes* is now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms Auct.D.4.8. The combined Durham volumes are listed in *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 10, 50 (4), 85, and 91 (*xii prophetae et Interpretatio nominum hebraicorum*) of which the last two were listed as being at Oxford in the early fifteenth century. The Worcester copies are extant at Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.34, F.124. The Ely *Interpretationes* is now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms 582; those of Rochester are an early twelfth-century copy (of Jerome's edition) bound with some of his Old Testament commentaries and now Cambridge, Trinity College Ms.1238, another eleventh-century copy (probably also Jerome), Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B.79.105 and two fourteenth-century acquisitions in *ibid.* B82.6 and B83.3, the last of which was bound with the *Biblia pauperum* of Nicholas de Hannapis (†1291). The Canterbury volumes of the *Interpretationes* listed in the Eastry catalogue in James, *ALCD* nos. 137, 197, 198, and 209 are the earlier edition of Jerome; nos. 910, 940, and 1229 are Langton's and nos. 1305 and 1415 could have been either. Nos. 520 and 525 were bound with Bibles.

<sup>43</sup> Richard H. and Mary A. Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons, Studies on the Manipulus florum of Thomas of Ireland*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval



aids to learning, which were to prove of great benefit to preachers as well as to masters and teachers, must have been developed to keep pace with the increasing numbers of books available in the field of biblical studies and also in the newer science of theology which had begun to take shape as an independent discipline. A variety of reference books appeared in order to provide easy access to the authoritative texts, that is, to the Scriptures and the Fathers. Among these were verbal concordances to the Bible; they were first compiled by the Dominicans at Saint-Jacques, Paris, where at least one English Dominican, Richard of Stavensby (†?1262), was prominent. Christ Church had a number of these concordances: one was given by Henry Wodehull to Canterbury College, Oxford where he had been monk warden in the 1360s and another was bound with the *Interpretationes* which was, of course, of the same genre;<sup>44</sup> there was a concordance at Norwich and another at the Norwich cell of Yarmouth.<sup>45</sup> The concordance acquired by Thomas de Horsted (fl.1330s), monk of Rochester, and now in the Royal Collection of manuscripts is the third edition of the Saint-Jacques compilation and is in the form of a subject index of the Bible under 461 headings;<sup>46</sup> it would have given ample scope for a monk preacher seeking appropriate passages to support his chosen theme. *Compendia*, such as the *Diversae auctoritates ex diversis auctoribus secundum ordinem alphabeti sub compendio compilatae* at Durham and similar volumes at Rochester and Worcester were also common.<sup>47</sup> The popular *distinctiones* gradually evolved under the influence of the highly favored preaching technique of expanding on the different meanings of certain words in the chosen biblical text. These particular handbooks for homilists were "the most highly evolved form of the spiritual dictionary", of which Peter

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Studies, Studies and Texts 47 (Toronto, 1979) 44, [hereafter cited as Rouse, *Preachers*].

<sup>44</sup> W. Pantin, *Canterbury College, Oxford*, Oxford Historical Society, new series, (1947–1985) 1:4, 12, [hereafter cited as Pantin, *Cant. Coll. Ox.*] and James, *ALCD* no. 1229 in the Eastray list. The latter may be the volume that is now Cambridge, St John's College Ms 51. For the Dominicans of Saint-Jacques, see Rouse, *Preachers*, 9–11.

<sup>45</sup> Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B62.23 and B64.7.

<sup>46</sup> London, British Library, Ms Royal 4E.v; see also Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B83.2.

<sup>47</sup> The Durham volume is in *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 61; the Rochester volume, now London, British Library, Ms Royal 7 B.xiii, is entitled *Excepciones ex libris 23 auctorum*. Ms F.51 at Worcester is similarly entitled *Exceptiones*.

the Chanter's *Summa Abel* may have been the earliest to have been arranged alphabetically.<sup>48</sup> A thirteenth-century distinction collection which ran from *Abiecto* to *Zona* was purchased through the contributions of eleven Worcester monks as a note on the flyleaf of Ms Q.42 records. This same work was at Canterbury in the early fourteenth century and among the volumes at the Norwich cell of Yarmouth in the fifteenth century; a *Distinctio super psalterium* was given by a Winchester monk to a Worcester monk in exchange for a work of Hilary of Poitiers when they were both students at Gloucester College in the early years of the fourteenth century.<sup>49</sup> A theological distinction collection, entitled *Summa theologie alphabetice* was acquired by Nicholas Hambury, another Worcester monk student at Oxford over a century later.<sup>50</sup>

A host of *florilegia* also appeared; these were anthologies of extracts from earlier writers, Thomas of Ireland's *Manipulus florum* (c.1306) being one of the most notable. Worcester had two copies, Canterbury and Durham at least one.<sup>51</sup> The title of *tabula* was given to another handy research tool that became widely available in the thirteenth century after its initial development in the teaching centers of Paris and Oxford. One of the most comprehensive was the *Tabula septem custodiarum super bibliam* which was a concordance to patristic writers' expositions of specific passages from Scripture. Durham had a copy relating to New Testament texts and Norwich had one or something very similar.<sup>52</sup> Durham also possessed

<sup>48</sup> Smalley, *Bible*, 246. See also Christina von Nolcken, "Some Alphabetical Compendia and how Preachers used them in fourteenth-century England," *Viator* 12 (1981) 271–88, at 274–5.

<sup>49</sup> For Canterbury see James, *ALCD* no. 1614 in the Eastry catalogue; the Yarmouth manuscript is listed in Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B64.6; the compiler was Maurice who flourished in the thirteenth century and was variously described as English and Irish. The Oxford monks were Philip de Lusteshalle and Richard de Bromwych respectively, *BRECP*.

<sup>50</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Ms F.130; as it ran from *Abel* to *Zelus* it was probably that of Peter the Chanter. See Rouse, *Preachers*, 7–11 where distinction collections and concordances are discussed.

<sup>51</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.153, Q. 23; a Canterbury copy was at Oxford, Pantin, *Cant. Coll. Ox.* 1:19, 50; Durham *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 53, *Liber qui dicitur manipulus florum*. Worcester also had, in Ms Q.55, a *florilegium* attributed to pseudo-Chrysostom.

<sup>52</sup> The Durham Ms is now London, British Library, Ms Harley 3858 and was written by Robert Masham; see Rouse, *Registrum* xcvi–ciii. The Norwich copy is listed in Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B58.5. The *Tabula septem custodiarum* was originally an early fourteenth-century compilation of the Oxford Franciscans, Rouse, *Registrum* civ–cv. For additional information on subject indexes see Rouse, *Preachers*, 11–23.

a *Tabula vel concordantie super glossas Biblie*, and Worcester a volume with not only a series of *tabulae* for writings of Augustine, Anselm, and Gregory but also *exempla* or short extracts illustrating the virtues and vices, some taken from the *Gesta Romanorum*.<sup>53</sup>

The task of indexing the contents of many of the volumes already on the cathedral library shelves was frequently undertaken for the convenience of the community by individual monks: Thomas Hyndringham at Norwich (fl.1430s), for example, provided an index for Haymo of Auxerre's commentary on the Pauline Epistles. William Thornham at Rochester (fl.1370s) compiled the index still to be seen in the community copy of Zacharias Chrysopolitanus' concordance cum commentary of the gospels.<sup>54</sup> These and other finding aids for speedy reference increased in quantity and variety as more flexible systems were devised, and they were regarded as essential acquisitions for the monastic libraries. The above is only a cursory selection from among the profusion of study and teaching aids that accumulated in cathedral cloisters.

By frequent recourse to the phrase "at least", when referring to the number of copies of books available for the monks' use, I am concerned to draw attention to one significant fact of which there can be no doubt: all monastic libraries were larger than the results obtainable by our reconstructions from surviving evidence. We shall never know the extent of the dispersal and destruction from which they suffered at the dissolution. Furthermore, an inspection of the medieval catalogue entries of Canterbury, Rochester, and Durham books, confirmed by an examination of the contents of some of those that survive, reveals that an individual volume could be a miniature library in itself containing up to twenty items not all necessarily closely related in their subject matter.<sup>55</sup> Although

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<sup>53</sup> Durham Cathedral, Ms A.III.35; Worcester Cathedral, Ms F.154; Worcester Cathedral, Ms F.80 also contained the *Gesta Romanorum*. For Prior Simon Bozoun of Norwich (†1352), who purchased several *tabulae* including one of Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, see Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B58.18.

<sup>54</sup> Cambridge University Library, Ms Kk.2.20 (Norwich); London, British Library, Ms Royal 3 C.vii (Rochester). The latter concordance was known as *Unum ex quatuor de concordia evangelistarum*; it was also owned by Worcester and survives as London, British Library, Ms Royal 4 D.xii.

<sup>55</sup> In the Estry catalogue at Canterbury, James, *ALCD*, item no. 1394, which had belonged to Richard de Cruce included twenty titles; no. 1420, headed *Expositio Rabani de Agno Paschali*, is followed by twenty-one disparate titles. The Rochester manuscript, now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Ms 62, contains fourteen separate treatises; Durham *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 59 reveals that items K, L, and M were similar.

the pace of acquisition had generally slowed down by the late fourteenth century, the old authoritative texts continued to be consulted, witness the choice of books that accompanied John Lawerne from Worcester to Oxford in the mid-fifteenth century: among the thirty volumes were biblical commentaries of John Chrysostom, Andrew of St Victor, and Stephen Langton.<sup>56</sup> Of the fifteen or so volumes in which the Rochester monk, Thomas Wybarn (†1470/1), wrote his name and caveat twelve were of thirteenth-century origin or earlier.<sup>57</sup>

Wybarn's other three volumes were of Franciscan authorship. The friars' extensive scholarly output, which was motivated by their vocation to teach, preach, and convert, was well represented in the Benedictine cathedral cloisters. The commentaries of Alexander of Hales (†1249), Hugh of St Cher (†1263), Nicholas Gorran (†1295), Nicholas of Lyra (†1340), and William Brito († late thirteenth century) seem to have been widely distributed, especially the works of Nicholas of Lyra whose Old and New Testament commentaries were at Rochester, Canterbury, Durham, Worcester, Norwich, and the Norwich cell of Yarmouth.<sup>58</sup> Brito's *Expositiones vocabulorum Biblie iuxta alphabeticum* or *Super bibliam* found favor at Worcester, Norwich, and Durham, and there were at least two copies at Canterbury in Prior Eastry's day.<sup>59</sup>

The friars' homiletic writings were also remarkably popular among English Benedictines if we may judge from the cathedral priories' holdings. The Worcester monks were particularly well supplied since they possessed four volumes containing sermons of Gilbert of Tournai (†1288), and other volumes with sermons of Nicolas of Bayard (fl. ?1300), Guy of Evreux (fl. 1290), James of Lausanne (†1322), Drogo (n.d.), Nicholas of Ockham (†c.1350) and many more.<sup>60</sup> In addition, there is one manuscript containing

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<sup>56</sup> Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B116.14, 4, 12; there were also works of several classical authors.

<sup>57</sup> *BRECP*.

<sup>58</sup> London, British Library, Ms Royal 4 A.xv (Rochester); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms 251 (Canterbury); Durham Cathedral Mss A.1.3–5; Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.25–28; Cambridge University Library, Ms ii.1.23 (Norwich); Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B64.18 (Yarmouth).

<sup>59</sup> Smalley, *Bible*, 182, where she describes the volume as a dictionary of biblical terms; Worcester Cathedral, Ms F.13; Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B57.5a, B62.24 (Norwich); *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 49 (Durham); James, *ALCD* item nos. 642 and 1555 in the Eastry catalogue (Canterbury).

<sup>60</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.36, F.77, Q.19, Q.57 (Tournai); Mss Q.4

sermons preached by some fifteen Oxford friars that must have begun life as a Worcester monk student's notebook.<sup>61</sup> Sermons as well as other works of the Dominican Januensis or James of Voragine (†1298) were much in demand: Durham had several copies of his sermons, one copy described as *Opus quadragesimale*; there was a new copy at Canterbury College, Oxford in 1508; at Worcester there were and still are two, one with a *tabula* compiled by Henry Fouke (fl.1340); at Norwich there were two volumes containing *tabulae* to his biblical writings.<sup>62</sup> James of Voragine's other popular work, the *Legenda aurea*, was a treasury of illustrative source material to enliven the preacher's discourse; there were copies at Canterbury, Yarmouth, Worcester, Durham, and Winchester; St Swithun's had two, both extant, one of which is arranged according to the seasons of the Church's year and has the ownership inscription of John Drayton (fl.1307).<sup>63</sup> To the friars' sermons we must add those of the Fathers: Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and their successors Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Aelred of Rievaulx. Finally, there were collections of the many secular preachers whose rhetoric was greatly admired and whose homilies were preserved and copied, Innocent III, Ralph Acton, and John Felton to name only a few. Copies of the *Sermones de tempore* of John Felton (†c.1434), vicar of St Mary Magdalen, Oxford, for example, were at Canterbury College, Norwich, and Worcester;<sup>64</sup> and the *Sermones dominicales* of Ralph Acton were acquired by Norwich and Durham.<sup>65</sup>

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(Bayard), Q.12 (Evreux), Q.19 (Lausanne), F.5 (Drogo), Q.74 (Ockham); Ms F.5 has a number of sermons of other friars.

<sup>61</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Ms Q.46; see *BRECP* under John de Dumbleton; these sermons are in the form of *reportationes*.

<sup>62</sup> *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 43, 75, 76 (Durham); *Pantin, Cant. Coll. Ox.* 1:86, no. 41 (*Sermones Jacobi de Voragine opus novum*); Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.115, Q.64 (Fouke); Cambridge University Library, Mss ii.1.30, ii.3.22 (Norwich).

<sup>63</sup> Cambridge University Library, Ms Ff.5.31, which was in the custody of the monk lector, John de Frome in the 1350s (Canterbury); Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B64.8 (Yarmouth); Worcester Cathedral, Ms F.45; Durham Cathedral, Ms B.iv.39A and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms Laud misc. 489; Cambridge University Library, Ms Gg.2.18 and Cambridge, Trinity College Ms 338 (Winchester), of which the former was Drayton's copy.

<sup>64</sup> London, British Library, Add. Ms. 22572 (Canterbury College); Cambridge University Library, Ms ii.3.22, fols. 43r-144r (Norwich); Worcester Cathedral, Ms Q.45, fols. 1r-137v. There were also a number of anonymous sermon collections, e.g. in Worcester Cathedral, Mss Q.3, Q.6, Q.9.

<sup>65</sup> Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B60.6 (Norwich); Durham University Library Ms Cosin v.iii.14.

Any quantitative evaluation is totally dependent on surviving manuscripts and on the incomplete and often difficult to interpret medieval lists of former holdings. It is, therefore, all the more striking to find that sermon collections and volumes containing sermons may have occupied as much shelf space in some of the monastic cathedral libraries as theology, history, or canon law. In the early fourteenth-century Eastr catalogue, for example, of over 1800 items more than 200 are described as *sermones* or *omelie* or have one or more sermons listed among their contents. The 1392 inventory of Durham priory books is a more sophisticated production than the Eastr list, with both subject and author headings as well as some *incipits*. One of the subdivisions is headed *sermones*; but many sermons are found in other sections, such as the ones devoted to *libri diversorum doctorum theologiae* and to the writings of Augustine, Gregory, and Bernard.<sup>66</sup> In other locations within the Durham cloister there were *sermones diversi* including a volume composed by the Durham monk preacher Robert Rypon.<sup>67</sup> For Worcester the sermon collection totals close to fifty volumes, most of which remain *in situ*.<sup>68</sup>

As to the handbooks on preaching methods, since so few of these have survived and since most of them emanated from a university background, David d'Avray has suggested that they may never have gained general popularity.<sup>69</sup> The cathedral priories bear out his statement in that their libraries include only a few recorded copies. The Eastr catalogue, for instance, lists six, all anonymous although two can probably be identified as those of Richard of Thetford (thirteenth century) and of the Franciscan John of la Rochelle (†1245).<sup>70</sup> The Worcester monks also had a

<sup>66</sup> *Cat. Vet. Lib.* in which see the list of books kept in the spendement 10–34, the *sermones* 26–8, the *libri diversorum* 24–6 and the sermons of Augustine and other Fathers of the church 19–21. Another list, dated 1395, has some additional volumes 46–80.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 75–6; this list is dated 1395 and the books are described as *in diversis locis infra claustrum*, *ibid.* 46.

<sup>68</sup> John K. Floyer and Sidney G. Hamilton, *Catalogue of Manuscripts preserved in the Chapter Library of Worcester Cathedral* (Oxford, 1906) will give a general idea of the impressive sermon collection there, until superseded by Rodney Thomson's forthcoming catalogue.

<sup>69</sup> David d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars. Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985) 78.

<sup>70</sup> In the Eastr catalogue these are James, *ALCD* no. 1420 (now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Ms 441, *Tractatus fratris Ricardi de Thetford de modo predicandi*, pp. 13–29), no. 616 [John of La Rochelle's *De modis negociandi*

copy of Thetford's *Ars dilatandi sermones*, and Norwich and Durham possessed the earlier *Summa de arte predicandi* of Alan of Lille (†1203).<sup>71</sup> Durham also had Robert of Basevorn's *Tractatus de arte predicandi* (early fourteenth century) and Worcester the *Famosus modus predicandi*, the attribution of which to the Franciscan John of Wales (†1285) may be spurious.<sup>72</sup> The *Summa predicantium* of the Dominican John Bromyard (†1352), although not a guide to the approved techniques of composition, was a veritable encyclopedia of homiletic material including *exempla* arranged under headings in alphabetical order. Thomas de Horsted procured one for his community at Rochester; and the surviving sermon collections of the two Benedictine bishops of Rochester, John Shepey (†1360) and Thomas Brinton (a monk of Norwich, †1389) reveal that both made use of Bromyard.<sup>73</sup>

The only Benedictine known to have written a handbook on the preparation of sermons is the Chester monk, Ranulph Higden (†1364), better known for his historical work, the *Polychronicon*.<sup>74</sup> The relatively late appearance of his *Ars componendi sermones* and its origin within a claustral setting led Margaret Jennings to see him in the context of an "ever-developing pastoral renewal" motivated by a personal concern to offer his readers "an almost foolproof course towards successful preaching".<sup>75</sup> This work, together with a *Speculum curatorum* and a *Distinctiones theologiae* form Higden's contribution to sermon preparation; but it must be said

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*circa themata*, identified by Père Th.-M. Charland, *Artes Praedicandi, Contribution à l'histoire de la rhétorique au moyen âge* (Paris/Ottawa, 1936) 63]. A third, the *Summa fratris R. de modo predicandi* (no. 626) may also refer to Thetford. For general remarks see the chapter on "sermon-making" in G.R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England, an Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c.1350-1450* (Cambridge, 1926) 314-6.

<sup>71</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Ms F.84, fols. 1r-11v; Cambridge University Library, Ms Ff.5.28, fols. 43r-75r (Norwich); *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 21, 25, and 101 (Durham) where it is attributed to Alanus Porretanus.

<sup>72</sup> Cambridge University Library, Ms Mm.3.14, fols. 206r-33r (Durham), Worcester Cathedral, Ms F. 154, fols. 204r-7v. Portions of Basevorn's treatise have been transcribed by Charland in *Artes*, 233-323.

<sup>73</sup> The Rochester volume is now London, British Library, Ms Royal 7 E.iv and the Norwich copy is listed in Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B58.25. The references to Shepey's and Brinton's use of Bromyard are in Alfred B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to AD 1500*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1957 and 1959) 1:278 (under Bromyard).

<sup>74</sup> Churchill Babington and Joseph R. Lumby eds., *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi Cestrensis*, 9 vols, Rolls Series (London, 1865-6).

<sup>75</sup> M. Jennings, *The Ars Componendi Sermones of Ranulph Higden*, O.S.B. (Leiden, 1991) xxxiv, xxxvi.

that of the five surviving copies of the *Ars componendi* only one is known to have belonged to a religious house, and no copies of the *Speculum* have been identified with certainty. The *Distinctiones*, however, was in both the Worcester and Durham libraries.<sup>76</sup> I would suggest that Ranulph Higden's *Ars* and his *Speculum* may have been compiled in response to an expressed need among the local parish clergy, while the *Distinctiones* would have been a useful addition to the reference section in the monastic book presses. However, I consider that there are insufficient grounds for claiming Higden's productions as evidence of a need to train monks to fill vacant parishes, or for interpreting them as the sign of a change of direction among Benedictines vis-à-vis their monastic vocation.

The monks, as we have now seen, had an abundant supply of sermons from the Fathers to the friars: many were full length sermons for Sundays and for saints' days and feast days throughout the liturgical year and were frequently provided with subject indexes for ready reference. Others were Lenten sermons, sermons for elections, visitations, synods, and other special occasions.<sup>77</sup> Still others were collations for use in the monastic chapter, sermons for reading aloud to the community at mealtimes or *reportationes* copied down in a university center.<sup>78</sup> While some were cast in the form of model sermons, others were presented as schema or skeleton sermons for the preacher to fill out with material appropriate to his chosen text.<sup>79</sup> A wide selection of such material was available in the preaching aids and reference works described above. Moreover, individual monks frequently had in their custody volumes of

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* xli-xlvii; Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.128 fols. 1r-125r and F.80 fols. 209r-326r; Lambeth Palace, Ms 23 (Durham) fols. 202r-49v where it is described as *valde utiles*; the last volume also contains the sermons of James of Voragine for the season of Lent, fols. 144r-201v.

<sup>77</sup> E.g., Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.5 and Q.45, Sunday sermons throughout the year; Lambeth, Ms 23 (Durham), Lenten sermons; Worcester Cathedral, Mss F.10 and Q.77, sermons for special occasions.

<sup>78</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Mss Q.18, Liber collationum; *Cat. Vet. Lib.* 81 (Durham) three sets of homilies in the section *libri pro refectorio*; Worcester Cathedral, Mss Q.46, *Reportationes* and F.10, which has been described as a Benedictine preaching anthology.

<sup>79</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Ms F.10 also provides model sermons; *ibid.* Ms F.126 contains sermon schema, and the original label of *ibid.* Ms Q.53 reads: *in isto volumine continentur themata cum eorundem inductionibus et divisionibus ... pro toto anno tam pro dominicis et aliis diebus temporalibus quam pro festis sanctorum.*



sermons and of what may be classed as sermon related subject matter, a strong indication that they expected to be called upon to preach. The name of the Canterbury monk, Richard de Cruce (fl. early thirteenth century), for example, was attached to a volume containing a miscellany of items almost all of which could be profitably consulted when preparing sermons: these included *Liber sermonum*, *Notule et distinctiones*, *Dicta patrum utilia*, and treatises on the virtues and vices.<sup>80</sup> Among the books found in Robert Stone's *cubiculum* at Canterbury College in 1508/9 were a Bible bound with concordances of both the Old and New Testaments, Nicholas of Lyra's *Super bibliam*, a *Legenda sanctorum*, the *De gestis Romanorum* and a *Speculum exemplorum*. John Lawerne of Worcester took several volumes of sermons with him to Oxford including those of the Dominican Guy of Evreux and of Bernard of Clairvaux.<sup>81</sup>

Janet Coleman observed that it was Benedictine policy to have monk students undergo specific training to enable them "to preach *extra muros* in the face of mendicant rivalry": and to equip the claustral libraries with the requisite handbooks to aid them in instructing the faithful who attended cathedral services. This is accurate in what it states; but we can now see that it may be misleading in what it omits.<sup>82</sup> Benedictine preaching *extra muros* was not confined to challenging the mendicants with whom the mutual hostility has tended to be overdone. Many, if not most, Benedictine sermons were influenced by, and some possibly largely dependent on, mendicant homiletic material and mendicant manuals. There is in fact some evidence of mutual cooperation in that a late thirteenth-century quire of sermons on the gospel of John was loaned by the Worcester monks to the Worcester friars minor.<sup>83</sup>

What remains tantalizingly uncertain is the extent to which the monks profited from their profusion of sermons. Some would have been suitable for private reading; others, like the model sermons, would probably have been adapted by the monastic preacher to suit the occasion. D'Avray suggests that the majority of sermon collections were not for popular consumption in the form in which

<sup>80</sup> James, *ALCD*, Eastry catalogue no. 1394.

<sup>81</sup> Pantin, *Cant. Coll. Ox.* 1:89 (Canterbury); Sharpe, *Eng. Ben. Lib.* B116.24 and B116.8 (Worcester).

<sup>82</sup> Janet Coleman, *English Literature in History 1350–1400, Medieval Readers and Writers* (London, 1987) 174.

<sup>83</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Ms Q.89, fol. 1r.

they were written.<sup>84</sup> A “pick and mix” approach is indicated for which evidence is not lacking. It would have been facilitated by reference to the subject indexes and also to the *exemplum* collections for a few illustrative and edifying stories selected with the particular audience in view.<sup>85</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Finally, we should not assume that Benedictines are to be included in Père Charland’s condemnation of the pedantic rigidity of later medieval sermons that resulted in “la mort de l’éloquence sacrée” in the fourteenth century and the consequent failure to convert.<sup>86</sup> He traced the cause to the increasing artificiality of the preaching techniques for which the universities were to blame; and a few contemporary sermon writers like James of Lausanne saw and lamented this decline in their own lifetime.<sup>87</sup> I suggest that, while the monks kept abreast of developments in learning and kept up their intellectual standards by maintaining a modest presence at the university and by preserving well stocked libraries in the cloister, for the most part they neither specialized nor excelled in preaching or teaching. Their vocation was first and foremost simply to be, and secondly, to do what they were required to do at any given moment in time according to the needs identified by the abbot or prior and chapter. This ambivalence is succinctly expressed in a note at the end of a sermon in one of the Worcester sermon collections:

*Qui nescit predicare verbis predicet operibus  
Citiùs credunt homines operi quam sermoni  
Quia cepit iesus facere et docere.*<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> D’Avray, *Preaching*, 111–2.

<sup>85</sup> This suggestion concurs with the Rouses’ assessment of the *Summa Guiotina* of Guy of Evreux (written in the 1290s) with its five “interchangeable parts” from which the different sections of a sermon could be constructed, Rouse, *Preachers*, 87–90. There is a useful list of *exempla* from printed sources in F.C. Tubach, *Index Exemplum, a Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*, FF Communications, Vol. 86 no. 204, (Helsinki, 1969).

<sup>86</sup> Charland, *Artes*, 225.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 224–6.

<sup>88</sup> Worcester Cathedral, Ms F.10, fol. 138r: *He who does not know how to preach in words let him preach by example. Men are more apt to give credence to deeds than to words, for Jesus undertook both to act and to teach.*

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## BENEDICTINES AND PREACHING THE *PASTORALIA* IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND: A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY

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By any standards of measurement, the last quarter-century has seen academic interest in medieval sermons flourish. Building on the seminal work of scholars of an earlier generation, historians, theologians, and literary critics have examined the rhetorical forms of sermons, their theological and pastoral content,<sup>1</sup> and their importance in religious, social, and cultural affairs. In fact, this stimulation of interest has even fostered the study of sermon materials derived from groups not often associated with preaching, especially with preaching for popular audiences. This essay will briefly recapitulate the case that has been made for the importance of the sermons of one group, Benedictine preachers in England in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and suggest that further investigation of their sermons may complement the work being done with sermons from other sources in England.

The relative neglect in which Benedictine preaching in England in the late middle ages has languished is hardly surprising in light of the statement by the great scholar of English preaching G.R. Owst:

By the time that the age of Fitzralph and Wycliffe has begun all the great names in the history of monastic eloquence have disappeared, and the pulpit here [England] seems to share in the general decline of cloister fame and cloister influence.<sup>2</sup>

Even in its own terms, Owst's judgment is ironic because, in fact, so much of his own illustrative material is drawn from Benedictine

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<sup>1</sup> By pastoral content, or *pastoralia*—the term which has come into vogue recently—one means the basic catechetical materials which pastors were to use in instructing Christian believers. These materials would often include the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the works of mercy, the Seven Deadly Sins, and various prayers such as the *Pater noster* and the *Ave Maria*. For further references about this matter, see note 12 below.

<sup>2</sup> G.R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (1926; rpt. New York, 1965) 49.

sources. Indeed, the principal collection to be discussed in this essay, the sermons of Robert Rypon of Durham, is cited repeatedly by Owst in his own work. Unfortunately, the effect of Owst's comment is still with us because even as fine a work as H.L. Spencer's recent *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, in placing its emphasis on vernacular sermons and, as Valerie Edden has pointed out, in exhibiting a "bias towards radical and reformist preachers",<sup>3</sup> runs the risk of failing to give sufficient attention to the influence of orthodox preachers whose sermons, while directed to popular audiences, have been preserved in Latin.

Be that as it may, the growth of scholarly interest in sermons at large has sparked the study of Benedictine preaching. One might argue that it began with Margaret Jennings' study and publication of the *ars praedicandi* of Ranulf Higden, a fourteenth-century Benedictine.<sup>4</sup> Concurrently, monastic and ecclesiastical historians were calling attention to Benedictine documents which officially sanctioned, indeed mandated, the training of monks—especially some of those sent to university—for the task of vernacular preaching.<sup>5</sup> The work of Barbara Harvey on the monks of Westminster and more recently that of Joan Greatrex on the monks of Worcester and Norwich make it clear that such theoretical injunctions were actually carried out.<sup>6</sup>

A final stumbling block to a recognition of the influence of Benedictine preaching has always been the relative scarcity of sermon manuscripts of Benedictine provenance. Of course, the sermons of Thomas Brunton were well known, but often regarded

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<sup>3</sup> Valerie Edden, "Review of Helen Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1993)," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 34 (1994) 19.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Jennings, "Monks and the «*Artes Praedicandi*» in the Time of Ranulph Higden," *RevB* 86 (1976) 119–28; "The *Ars Componendi sermones* of Ranulph Higden," in *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley, 1978) 112–26; *The Ars Componendi Sermones of Ranulph Higden O.S.B.* (Leiden, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> W.A. Pantin, *Documents Illustrating the Activities of the General and Provincial Chapters of the English Black Monks 1215–1540*, 3 vols., Camden Society 3rd series, 45, 47, 54 (London, 1931–37) 2:11–2, 75–6, 211–4.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Harvey, "The Monks of Westminster and the University of Oxford," in *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack*, eds. F.R.H. Du Boulay and Caroline M. Barron (London, 1971) 108–30, at 118–9; Joan Greatrex, "Benedictine Monk Scholars as Teachers and Preachers in the Later Middle Ages: Evidence from Worcester Cathedral Priory," in *Monastic Studies II*, ed. Joan Loades (1991) 213–25; "Monk Students from Norwich Cathedral Priory at Oxford and Cambridge, c. 1300 to 1530," *English Historical Review* 106 (1991) 555–83.

less as the product of his Benedictine roots than a result of his appointment as Bishop of Rochester.<sup>7</sup> Such a judgment, of course, begs the question of how he had attained the homiletic training demonstrated in his new role. Less well-known were the sermon manuscripts of Brunton's fellow Benedictine bishop, John Sheppey.<sup>8</sup> However, his collections, too, could be denigrated as not genuinely Benedictine since much of their content consisted of sermons he had collected rather than composed. That fact seemed to diminish the significance of his having collected the sermons and what the texts themselves might reveal about Benedictine homiletic interests and concerns. A third collection associated with an identifiable Benedictine, Robert Rypon, has already been mentioned as one cited extensively by Owst. However, Owst uses it as a source of illustrative homiletic material without adverting in any significant way to its Benedictine provenance. Perhaps the manuscript's status as the only readily identifiable collection of model sermons by a Benedictine without high ecclesiastical office may have led to the failure to examine it as a product of a larger Benedictine preaching effort. Other than these three manuscripts, the only extant sermon collections long held to be of Benedictine provenance are two manuscripts from Worcester Cathedral (F.10, F.126). While both are large codices containing many sermons, they are also, as Siegfried Wenzel has recently reminded us, highly complex assemblages of disparate materials which present many problems to any analyst.<sup>9</sup> That condition and the apparent lack of other more easily comprehensible Benedictine collections has led to a piecemeal approach to their contents rather than an effort to understand what they may reveal about a larger Benedictine preaching program.

Finally, there are two Oxford, Bodleian Library codices, Bodley 649 and Laud misc. 706, which have occupied a good deal of my

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Aquinas Devlin, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester (1373–1389)*, 2 vols., Camden Society 3rd series 85–86, (London, 1954).

<sup>8</sup> Sheppey's collections are now MSS Oxford, Merton College 248 and New College 92. For work on this material, see G. Mifsud, "John Sheppey, Bishop of Rochester, as Preacher and Collector of Sermons," (B.Litt. thesis, Oxford, 1953) and A. Stacpoole, "Jean Sheppey," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, 16 vols. (Paris, 1937–1995) 8:761–2.

<sup>9</sup> For Wenzel's most recent discussion of these manuscripts, see Siegfried Wenzel, *Macaronic Sermons: Bilingualism and Preaching in Late-Medieval England* (Ann Arbor, 1994) 55–60.

scholarly attention for many years. Several years ago I argued that these sermon collections were indeed Benedictine and, in fact, constituted the remains of a concerted Benedictine effort in popular preaching.<sup>10</sup> I do not wish to discuss that question again, but rather, for the sake of argument, to assume that the Benedictines were indeed engaged in a much more systematic homiletic effort than has been realized—even if the existing evidence for it remains relatively meager.<sup>11</sup> If that is so, then it seems reasonable to begin to pose of extant Benedictine sermon collections, however limited in number and whether in Latin or English, the kinds of questions which recent scholarly investigations have asked of other English sermons of the period, not only basic questions of form and audience but also more intriguing ones about how these sermons may reveal and reflect Benedictine views of current theological issues, spiritual practices, and pastoral instruction. It is that last issue, pastoral instruction and its relation to preaching, a subject which has been given particular prominence in Spencer's study<sup>12</sup> to which I now wish to turn.

In her discussion of preaching and pastoral instruction, Spencer outlines the various episcopal statutes—stemming from the famous Canon 9 of the Council of the Province of Canterbury held at Lambeth under Archbishop Pecham's direction in 1281<sup>13</sup>—which admonished the clergy to instruct the faithful in the essentials of the faith. Her presentation makes a convincing case for the centrality of such instruction in the catechetical efforts of the English church subsequent to the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). Spencer also discusses the evidence that a principal method of pastoral instruction was the sermon. She goes on to point out the difficulties

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<sup>10</sup> Patrick J. Horner, FSC, "Benedictines and Preaching in Fifteenth-Century England: The Evidence of Two Bodleian Library Manuscripts," *Revb* 99 (1989) 313–32.

<sup>11</sup> For a recent, more detailed account of Benedictine preaching activity in this period, see Siegfried Wenzel, *Monastic Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, The Morton W. Bloomfield Lectures on Medieval English Literature, 3 (Kalamazoo, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Spencer, *Preaching*, 196–228. The subject was addressed again by Siegfried Wenzel in his paper "Preaching the Sins: Pecham or the Gospel?" delivered at the Tenth Medieval Sermon Studies Symposium in Oxford, July 1996.

<sup>13</sup> For the text of the statute, commonly referred to by its opening words *Ignorantia sacerdotum*, see *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, 11. A.D. 1205–1313*, eds. F.M. Powicke and Christopher R. Cheney, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1964) 2:900–5.

which could arise for preachers when faced with the dual demands of preaching the gospel and providing catechetical instruction. She notes, for example, the problem of integrating pastoral material into sermons based on scriptural themes taken from the *de tempore* cycle of Sunday readings. She also points out the difficulty of extended serial treatment of such pastoral matters as the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the sacraments given the variations of the annual liturgical calendar. Beyond that, questions arise about which elements of the pastoral material were preferred and so on.

Given the importance of pastoral instruction and its relationship with preaching to popular audiences, it seems reasonable to ask: if Benedictines had indeed become involved in popular preaching, what evidence, if any, of preaching the *pastoralia* is to be found in the sermon materials still extant? At this early stage of the investigation, the questions to be posed are quite basic, even simple:

1. Is there any evidence of systematic attention to *pastoralia* in Benedictine sermons? (The word "systematic" is used to distinguish these treatments from the incidental references to pastoral matters which will almost inevitably arise in preaching.)

2. In what kinds of sermons does this treatment of *pastoralia* occur: in *de tempore* or *de sanctis* sermons?; in sermons for other occasions, less associated with liturgical auspices?; in sermons with themes drawn from scripture?; in "modern" sermons or in less structurally elaborate ones?

3. How are the *pastoralia* treated: are they, or some aspect of them, the subject of the entire sermon? If instead, a part of a sermon, how is that to be integrated with other content? Further, is the pastoral material treated within the confines of one sermon or, as in several of the collections discussed by Spencer, measured out seriatim over several sermons?

4. Finally, how closely is the pastoral material in Benedictine sermons connected to that specified in *Ignorantia sacerdotum*?

With these questions in mind, I have begun to examine Benedictine sermons, concentrating so far on the sermons of Robert Rypon. Rypon's sermons are a good starting point: first, because his collection is extensive and homogeneous; and, second, because the marginal annotations outlining the parts of the sermons and important points of content suggest that the collection may have been intended to serve as a model for other preachers.



According to A.B. Emden,<sup>14</sup> Rypon, a monk of Durham cathedral priory, was a student at Durham College in Oxford by 1389, subsequently received bachelors and doctoral degrees in theology, and during his career held a number of positions of authority in his monastery and its dependencies as well as a diocesan appointment as "Penancer" in the diocese of Durham. The manuscript British Library, Harley 4898, the most complete version of Rypon's sermons, can be dated by internal reference to approximately 1410.<sup>15</sup> It contains fifty-nine sermons, thirty-two of which are intended for Lenten occasions. Of the remaining sermons, four are intended for Sundays in the temporal cycle, six for Rogation Days, six more for feasts of saints, and eight for diocesan synods—the last occasioned, perhaps, by Rypon's diocesan office. All of the sermons are "modern" in form with themes taken from the scriptural pericopes of the day, prothemes and divisions of parts etc.<sup>16</sup> The preponderance of Lenten sermons, as well as the large number for Rogation Day, suggests that the collection was intended for parochial use either by curates and/or by Benedictines supplementing them on those liturgical occasions when preachers and sermons would be most needed. Also noteworthy is the large number of sermons on different themes provided for each Lenten Sunday, as many as twelve for the first Sunday and nine for the second. There are multiple sermons for the other Lenten Sundays but fewer in number.<sup>17</sup> It is also clear, as we will see shortly, that Rypon recycles material for use in several sermons, what Siegfried Wenzel has called "macroformulas".<sup>18</sup> All of this, too, suggests that the collection was not just a record of Rypon's sermons but was organized for the instruction and use of other preachers.

When we turn to pastoral instruction in the sermons, we find it most fully in the sermons for the Second Sunday in Lent. Among the nine sermons for that Sunday in the manuscript, there are four

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<sup>14</sup> Alfred B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1955–57) 3:1618.

<sup>15</sup> ... *quod scisma duravit iam per 32 annos et amplius*—"which schism has lasted now thirty-two years and more" (fol. 55r). All subsequent references to manuscript Harley 4894 will be provided parenthetically in the text.

<sup>16</sup> For a recent discussion of "modern" sermon form and further references, see Spencer, *Preaching*, 228–47.

<sup>17</sup> This multiplying of sermons for the same Lenten Sunday seems characteristic of Benedictine sermon collections. See Horner, *Revb*, 322–4.

<sup>18</sup> Siegfried Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric* (Princeton, 1986) 206–7.

devoted largely to pastoral instruction: one (fols. 65v–69r) deals almost entirely with the Ten Commandments; a second (fols. 69r–72v) treats the Commandments and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; a third (fols. 73r–75r) explains the Creed with brief enumerations of the Commandments, the works of mercy, and the Seven Deadly Sins; and a fourth (fols. 83v–86v) deals extensively with the Seven Deadly Sins. So, even this cursory overview provides answers to some of our earlier questions. Yes, there is pastoral content in Rypon's sermons (and by extension those of others who may have used his collection for preaching). In this instance, the pastoral material is found primarily in "modern" sermons for Sundays in the temporal cycle with themes taken from the scriptural pericope.

In order to answer our other questions on the presentation of *pastoralia* and its connections to episcopal legislation, we need to look more closely at individual sermons. We find that in each of the four cases Rypon incorporates the pastoral material by relating it to a thematic word chosen from the scriptural pericope.<sup>19</sup> For example, for the theme *Scitis que precepta dederim vobis* (1 Thess 4:2; fol. 65v)<sup>20</sup>, he conveniently uses the word "*precepta*" as an opportunity for a discussion of the Commandments. In a subsequent sermon on the theme *Sic et ambuletis ut habundetis magis* (1 Thess 4:1; fol. 69), he notes that anyone walking has to be concerned about the *via*, an analytical maneuver which then allows him to discuss the *via mandatorum* and the *via misericordie* (fols. 70r–70v). Similarly, in the two other sermons a word from the scriptural theme serves as the means to introduce and to organize the pastoral content which is the bulk of the sermons' content. So far, then, the evidence seems clear: Rypon makes a careful effort to integrate the pastoral material by deriving it from his chosen scriptural theme.

Rypon is also concerned with a full presentation of pastoral content within a well-organized sermon. So, for example, his discussion of the Ten Commandments is divided into three parts: a preface which places the Decalogue in the context of two

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<sup>19</sup> The scriptural pericopes for these Sunday sermons correspond to those in the Sarum rite which was in widespread use in England in the fifteenth century. See J. Wickham Legg, *The Sarum Missal, Edited from Three Early Manuscripts* (Oxford, 1916).

<sup>20</sup> Scriptural citations are quoted from the manuscript, but, in general, correspond to the readings of the Vulgate. See *Biblia Sacra vulgatae editionis* (Rome, 1959).

overarching moral principles, the fundamental precept—*facere bonum* and the definitive prohibition—*declinare a malo* (fol. 66r). These principles, he explains, have governed man's behavior in his original state of innocence and his subsequent fallen condition. He also makes a distinction between *precepta legalia* and *precepta moralia* (fol. 66v). By the former he means various religious and secular customs and regulations governing aspects of behavior at particular times and places, including, for example, the dietary laws and sacrificial restrictions of the Mosaic code but also the church's rules on fasting and receiving the sacraments. Above and beyond these transitory rules stand the "moral precepts", the Commandments themselves, which transcend the limits of a particular age.

Only after this preface setting out fundamental principles and making basic distinctions does Rypon proceed to a discussion of the Commandments proper. As he begins, Rypon notes the essential reason for the discussion:

Since there is no salvation for the soul without observing the Commandments, it is necessary for each Christian to know them, and so I intend to give them to you that they might be written in your hearts.<sup>21</sup>

Once again his treatment is highly systematic. First he employs the familiar division of the Commandments into two tables—the first table containing the three Commandments pertaining to God, the second the remaining seven pertaining to neighbor.<sup>22</sup> He then goes on to explain how the Commandments of each table adhere to the two general moral principles he had already set out—the first Commandment—not having false gods—avoids evil and the second and third Commandments do good. Among the Commandments of the second table, the fourth does good by honoring father and mother, the remaining six avoid various kinds of evil against neighbor. Furthermore, since moral conduct can be carried out in heart, in word, or in deed (*corde, ore, opere*, fol. 67r), Rypon categorizes the Commandments according to this rubric.

<sup>21</sup> *Et breuiter ex quo non est salus anime sine horum observantia, ideo necesse est cuilibet christiano scire ista. Intendo igitur breuiter dare ista vobis ut sint scripta in tabulis cordis vestri* (fol. 67r).

<sup>22</sup> For discussions of the standard expositions of the Commandments, including the division into two tables, see Robert Raymo, "Works of Religious and Philosophical Instruction," in *A Manual of the Writing in Middle English 1050–1500*, ed. Albert Hartung (Hamden, CT. 1967–) 7:2284–90.

So, for example, one avoids evil to one's neighbor in work by not stealing from him, by not committing adultery with his wife and by not killing him. One avoids evil towards him in word by not giving false testimony against him. One avoids evil towards neighbor in the heart by not coveting his wife or his goods. Having explicated the Commandments according to general moral principles and basic categories of human action, Rypon turns to the third part of his analysis. Returning to each Commandment he spells out in more detail its varieties and implications. So, for instance, for the first Commandment, which receives more elaborate treatment than most of the others, he points out both its literal as well as its spiritual dimensions. Literally the worship of any spiritual creatures—that is angels or demons—is forbidden. So, too, is heresy—the spiritual equivalent of worshipping a false deity, one opposed to God as truth. A similar analysis follows for all the Commandments: one can kill one's neighbor spiritually by persuading him to do evil or even by withholding tithes from the church for that leads to a scarcity of the sacraments, the lifeblood of Christian souls.

Just this brief outline of the sermon's structure and content shows the relative comprehensiveness of Rypon's treatment of the Decalogue. He places it within a theological and philosophical context of moral law, and he sets out the specifics of each Commandment in considerable detail—a far cry from a simple enumeration of the Commandments themselves. Given this complexity and detail, it is hardly surprising that he provides a highly analytical and schematic apparatus to hold all the material together. The clear purpose is to convey information; the tone is straightforward and business-like, with few emotional appeals or rhetorical embellishments. Questions about audience might naturally be raised at this point, but comment on them will be deferred until after a brief explication of the three remaining sermons.

The next sermon in the collection, the fourth sermon for the Second Sunday in Lent, also deals with pastoral material, in this case the Commandments again but now in conjunction with the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Whereas in the previous sermon the thematic word *precepta* allowed Rypon to discuss "law" as a context for the Commandments, here another thematic word, *ambuletis*, provides an extended metaphor to integrate his pastoral content. Any walker must use his two feet which, metaphorically,

stand for the two great evangelical commands, love of God and love of neighbor. Anyone using his feet for this purpose will naturally travel, metaphorically, along the *via mandatorum* and the *via misericordie*.

The discussion of the Commandments to which Rypon then turns is basically similar in organization and content with what he had presented in the previous sermon: Commandments divided between God and neighbor and between doing good and avoiding evil in heart, word, or deed. However, he omits entirely the last part of his earlier analysis which provided the detailed examples of sinful behavior against each Commandment. Clearly, the need in this sermon to deal also with the works of mercy has led him to abbreviate a more complete treatment on the Decalogue.

Rypon's discussion of the works of mercy follows the same analytical and schematic procedure we have already seen. The seven corporal works are related to five basic human physical needs, and the seven spiritual works are intended to counteract the fundamental evils of sin and ignorance. Rypon concludes the discussion of each set with a verse mnemonic to aid in its recall.<sup>23</sup> As we have seen in the previous sermon, Rypon's emphasis is on the transmission of information arranged in a clear, organized fashion integrated to the sermon's scriptural theme. The inclusion of more than one aspect of *pastoralia* has also led to a curtailing of detail, presumably to control the length of the sermon and to keep its elements balanced.

The two remaining sermons, dealing respectively with the Creed and the Seven Deadly Sins, follow in organization, content, and tone the patterns already discussed. Each uses thematic words from Scripture to set up a discussion of *pastoralia*. The length of treatment and the degree of detail is determined by the amount of material to be discussed. For example, since the sermon devoted primarily to the Creed also includes brief references to the evangelical precepts, the Commandments, works of mercy and Deadly Sins, the treatment of the Creed consists largely of an enumeration of the various articles of belief. However, since the treatment of the Seven Deadly Sins is the exclusive focus of a subsequent sermon, the preacher allows himself to develop the material at greater

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<sup>23</sup> The mnemonics are as follows: for the corporal works of mercy: *Visito, poto, cibo, redimo, tego, colligo, condo* (fol. 72r); for the spiritual works: *Consulo, corrigo, solor, et oro, doceo, fero, dono* (fol. 72v).

length, setting out not only the generic level of each sin but also its various specific manifestations.

The discussion of these four sermons answers the third question posed much earlier—the *pastoralia*, here, at least, are integral to the sermons, forming for the most part the bulk of their content. We do find, however, that the preacher is able to adapt his presentation, offering more or less detail depending on the amount of *pastoralia* to be discussed. It almost appears that Rypon has offered the “full treatment” for the Commandments and the Deadly Sins in two sermons and used abbreviated versions in others. It might be argued that the same holds true for the discussion of the Creed. In his sermon on the Creed, Rypon compares the realm of faith to the firmament created in Genesis, and in an earlier sermon (fols. 60v–65v), he briefly compares the Creed to the twelve signs of the zodiac, an analogy also used twice by the Benedictine preacher of manuscript Bodley 649 who associates zodiac signs with activities of Christ as well as discussing heresies related to specific articles of belief.<sup>24</sup> Might not the repetition of the zodiac analogy with different explications suggest that Benedictine preachers are able to draw on some more elaborate pastoral treatment of the Creed which can be adapted for use on specific occasions? One might even speculate that there were full analyses of the various elements of the *pastoralia* which preachers could adapt in similar fashion. Confirmation of such possibilities awaits further study of Benedictine homiletic materials.

The final question posed earlier concerned the relation of the material in Rypon’s collection with *Ignorantia sacerdotum* and subsequent episcopal statutes. The evidence of these sermons suggests that in his presentation of *pastoralia* Rypon is clearly working in the tradition established by Pecham’s canon. While Rypon does not deal with all seven elements listed there—he has no discussion of the Seven Virtues or the Seven Sacraments—he does have the remaining five. Also, none of the sermons examined in the collection offers a treatment of the *Pater noster* and *Ave Maria*, material which the canon also omits. Finally, in several specific points Rypon is quite close to the content of the canon—he, too, despite some confusion, settles on fourteen, rather than the usual twelve, articles of the Creed divided in the fashion outlined in *Ignorantia*

<sup>24</sup> Bodleian Library, Oxford, Bodley 649, Sermon 6, fols. 33r–40v and Sermon 7, fols. 40v–48r.

*sacerdotum*. And in his discussion of the Deadly Sins, he, too, elaborates what the canon calls their “progeny”. While not every term or sub-category is identical, it remains clear that Rypon is following a tradition set forth in Pecham’s decree.

Since this essay has tried to answer several basic, even simple questions, and since it should be natural for a “preliminary” study such as this to leave some questions unanswered or even to raise new ones, let me conclude by briefly addressing two further questions. First, the always vexed question: the intended audience of these sermons. Most, but perhaps not all, were intended for fellow clergy, probably diocesan as well as Benedictine (especially when we recall Rypon’s diocesan office and the inclusion of synodal sermons in the collection). It seems clear from the neutral tone—the very lack of emotional appeal and spiritual exhortation—that the sermons were intended as models of form and content. That content, too, on occasion seems much more elaborate than would be warranted for the laity. Would, for example, a preacher addressing the laity need to list and define various sub-species of pride (*elatio, iactantia, insolencia, et al.*)? Rather, it seems that the sermon offers an illustration of how to apply pastoral content to thematic scriptural form and provides the preacher the framework of content to be adapted for individual use. The detailed explanations, which would be especially useful for clergy exercising their pastoral duties, could, as we have seen, be modified or reduced as preaching to lay audiences on specific occasions required.

Finally, a last question—a puzzling one. All four sermons discussed—and they are the principal sermons dealing with *pastoralia* in Rypon’s collection—are based on the scriptural pericopes for the Second Sunday in Lent. Is there any significance to *pastoralia* being preached on this Sunday? Perhaps the best starting point for a response comes from Rypon himself. In discussing the symbolic significance of the number twelve in the Creed, he cites a treatise of Innocent III, *De sacro altaris mysterio*.<sup>25</sup> In Chapter fifty-two of that treatise, Innocent explains why the choir at Mass, which symbolically represents the Gentiles to whom the gospel was preached after the Resurrection, is the proper group, as opposed to the subdeacons, to sing the Creed. In his explanation, Innocent specifically cites the Canaanite woman of Matthew’s gospel (Matt. 15:21–28)

<sup>25</sup> PL 217, 773–915, especially chapters 49–52 (827–830) dealing with the Creed.

who insisted that Christ should extend his mission beyond the Jewish people. Christ replied to her, *O mulier, magna est fides tua; fiat tibi sicut vis*. That text, which was interpreted as authorization to preach to the whole world, is part of the gospel pericope for the Second Sunday of Lent and may also have come to be seen as a charter authorizing universal catechesis. If such is the case, then on what better occasion could pastoral instruction be incorporated into popular preaching? Such an explanation is, at this point, only a possibility, one which needs confirmation. But it, as well as the other matters discussed in this essay, suggests that just as in the last quarter century we have come to realize that Benedictines had joined the ranks of popular preachers in late medieval England, so too will further study demonstrate that this Benedictine preaching effort, in accord with the mandates of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, included significant attention to instruction in *pastoralia*.

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**PART EIGHT**

**CISTERCIAN PREACHING**



## WERE THE SERMONS OF ST BERNARD ON THE SONG OF SONGS EVER PREACHED?

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The aim of this paper is to explore whether the text that we now have of Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs* reflects fairly closely something which he actually preached to his monks at Clairvaux. This is a weighty subject since by any standard those sermons are one of the classics of medieval spirituality, and were one of the chief works through which his reputation spread during his lifetime and was maintained for many centuries. The question will be approached by examining the arguments which have been used to support the view that the sermons have little connection with what Bernard might have preached to his community. The outcome may have wider significance since it raises issues relevant to other medieval sermons whose study over the last forty years has, to some degree, been influenced by what was believed to have been securely established about this group of Bernard's sermons.

On the other hand, it is not the purpose of this paper to argue that every text called a sermon was preached, or closely connected with something spoken aloud to an audience. Clearly this is not the case. One may cite, for example, the work which Adam of Dryburgh wrote on the life of Premonstratensian canons in which he clearly stated in his preface that he had divided his book into fourteen sermons to make it more lively for the reader:

so that the understanding of those reading may be enlightened, and their feelings stirred as if it were a present address.<sup>1</sup>

Adam's "sermons" betray the artificiality of his procedure at a glance for there is almost nothing in them which refers to his

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<sup>1</sup> Adam of Dryburgh, *Liber de ordine, habitu et professione canonicorum ordinis Praemonstratensis*, PL 198, praef. 5, 441-2: *ut eorum sic quasi presens allocutio legentium et illustret intellectum, et inflammet affectum.*

audience except for two things: their opening greeting to his "blessed brothers" and closing doxology. What is being questioned here is whether Bernard's sermons were of that artificial type, which broadly speaking is the present view.

Most scholars now hold that although Bernard did preach to his monks on the Song of Songs, the present texts are not what they heard; they argue that what he spoke originally had been so much altered and edited after its first delivery that what we have is more the product of the scriptorium rather than the pulpit. There is a sign of a shift in opinion in the recent translation of the first fifteen sermons published recently in *Sources chrétiennes*. There Paul Verdeyen of the university of Antwerp, after summarizing the present view, concluded that although there is some distance between what Bernard spoke and the texts, "one can consider the *Sermons on the Song of Songs* as capitular sermons of the abbot of Clairvaux".<sup>2</sup> An odd thing about this conclusion is that it is not based upon any apparent argument with the current view.

That view was created by that great and much lamented Benedictine scholar Dom Jean Leclercq. He first advanced it in an article which appeared in the *Revue bénédictine* in 1955 and seems to have maintained it until his death.<sup>3</sup> He formed it as a result of his reading the manuscripts, the essential basis for his great new edition of Bernard's works, which began to appear in 1957, with the first two volumes containing the *Sermons on the Song of Songs*.<sup>4</sup> Clearly that experience was crucial in the development of his understanding since earlier in his *Saint Bernard mystique*, published in 1948, he accepted the traditional view, namely that the texts do substantially give us what Bernard had preached.<sup>5</sup> That view, as Leclercq showed, goes back to the earliest days of serious medieval scholarship, to the remarkable Mabillon, and was the view restated

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<sup>2</sup> *Bernard de Clairvaux Sermons sur le Cantique*, intro. Paul Verdeyen, trans. Raffaele Fassetta, Sources chrétiennes 414 (Paris, 1996) 1:27–32, at 32.

<sup>3</sup> Jean Leclercq, "Les Sermons sur le Cantiques ont-ils été prononcés?" *Revb* 65 (1955) 71–89. This will be cited here from its reprinted form in Jean Leclercq, *Recueil d'Études sur saint Bernard et ses Écrits*, 5 vols. (Rome, 1962–92) 1:193–212. Hereafter, cited as *Recueil*. An English translation of this article appears as an "Introduction" to SoSS 2:vii–xxx, without any indication that it is a translation. Hereafter cited as Leclercq, "Intro."

<sup>4</sup> The *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* which appear in volumes 1 and 2 of *SBO* will be cited hereafter as *SC*, *SBO*.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Leclercq, *Saint Bernard Mystique* (Paris, 1948) 131–43, 180, 223.

forcefully by Vacandard in his life published a century ago.<sup>6</sup> Leclercq changed his mind because he found in the manuscripts a contrast between the highly wrought *Sermons on the Song of Songs* (and other themes), and shorter, simpler texts, which are sometimes called parables or sentences, as well as sermons. Such texts were, he suggested, noted down by Bernard's listeners as he spoke extemporaneously; they had not been drafted previously. The longer texts, on the other hand had not been presented to an audience, but were "first dictated (*dictare*) to a secretary, then reproduced (*transcribere*) in several copies with a view to being edited (*edere*)".<sup>7</sup> So for him the *Sermons on the Song of Songs* show Bernard's "literary" style not his "oral" style.

Very quickly Leclercq's view gained and held scholarly support. In 1980, for example, Emero Stiegman asserted on the basis of what Leclercq had written that the sermons were not delivered: that they were "the literary work of the scriptorium rather than the pulpit", in which "the text mimics an oral presentation". All references in them to the time of day, or to the reaction of his audience and so on were a "pure contrivance—all histrionic".<sup>8</sup> Seven years later in 1987 Michael Casey in his important study of Bernard as doctor of desire, citing Leclercq and Stiegman as his authorities, referred in passing to the "(pseudo)-oral format of the sermons".<sup>9</sup> Still nearer to us, in 1991 Beverly Kienzle taking Leclercq's views about how Bernard wrote these sermons as a given, found confirmation for them in a group of his liturgical sermons.<sup>10</sup> Brian Stock is one of the few scholars to have expressed himself more cautiously writing that:

[Bernard] did not circulate precisely what he said. His sermons were both oral and rhetorical performances, but on different

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<sup>6</sup> Leclercq, "Les sermons," in *Recueil* 1:193, note 2; Leclercq, "Intro." vii, note 2.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Leclercq, "The Making of a Masterpiece," being the introduction to *SoSS* 4:ix. In this case a French version followed as "Genèse d'un chef d'œuvre," *Collectanea cisterciensia* 47 (1985) 99–109.

<sup>8</sup> Emero Stiegman, "The Literary Genre of Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermones super Cantica Cantecorum*," in *Simplicity and Ordinarity*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt, *Cistercian Studies* 61 (Kalamazoo, 1980) 68–93 at 71, 73, 75.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Casey, *Athirst for God. Spiritual Desire in Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs*, *Cistercian Studies Series* 77 (Kalamazoo, 1988) 50.

<sup>10</sup> *Bernard of Clairvaux Sermons for the Summer Season*, trans. and intro. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, additional trans. James Jarzembowski, *Cistercian Fathers* 53 (Kalamazoo, 1991) 5–8.

occasions ... But his sermons never completely lost touch with the spoken milieu in which they were conceived and delivered.<sup>11</sup>

Here I have to confess that until two or three years ago I was entirely convinced by Leclercq's article, and adopted it in my thesis nearly forty years ago when discussing the sermons on the Song of Songs written by the English Cistercian John of Ford who finished the series which Bernard had begun.<sup>12</sup> Doubts began to surface in my mind as I decided to reread Leclercq's eight articles on the series as part of my preparation to write something on Bernard's commentary.<sup>13</sup> A crucial stage came when I decided to read the series of sermons which Bernard gave on Psalm 90 (in the Vulgate numbering), *Qui Habitat*, which are relevant because they were given within the long time span that Bernard was occupied with the Song of Songs: in Sermon 6 on the Psalm, Bernard referred to something he had written in Sermon 33 on the Song of Songs.<sup>14</sup> What it was that struck me as I read that series of sermons will be revealed later, but it made me look at each part of Leclercq's argument with fresh interest.

Now his argument will be followed in the order in which he presented it in 1955, except that what he called "Indices de style littéraire" will be divided into evidence external to the sermons, and evidence within them. There will, therefore, be some slight dislocation of the numbering which he originally gave to his arguments, which is reproduced here in brackets, along with the page references in *Recueil* 1, for convenience of the reader.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy. Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983) 409–10.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher John Holdsworth, "Learning and Literature of English Cistercians, 1167–1214, with special reference to John of Ford" (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1959) 111–9.

<sup>13</sup> The first seven published 1954–60 are conveniently gathered in *Recueil* 1:175–351. For the eighth see note 7 above.

<sup>14</sup> In *Psalmum «Qui Habitat»*, "Ser.6," par.7, ll.4–5, *SBO* 4:411, referring to SC, "Ser.33," par.8–16, *SBO* 1:239–45, Leclercq discusses the date of the Psalm series *SBO* 4:119, where he refers to his "Les étapes de la rédaction," *Revb* 65 (1955) 245–6 (*Recueil* 1:230–1). A more extensive discussion occurs in his "Les sermons de Bernard sur le psaume Qui habitat", in *Bernard de Clairvaux*, pref. Thomas Merton, Commission d'histoire de l'ordre de Cîteaux (Paris, 1953) 435–46, at 438, 444–5.

<sup>15</sup> The numbering was dropped in Leclercq's "Intro." where his headings for the two broad types of evidence are "reasons which suggest that the Sermons formed a written text" (vii–xvi) and "Points which would suggest oral delivery" (xvii–xxii).

I. *Indications of literary style*

A. *Evidence external to the sermons*

1. [1, 194–6] Leclercq noticed that in a letter which Bernard wrote to a Carthusian friend, Bernard of Portes, he used the verbs *dictare*, *transcribere*, *edere*, and the substantive *opus*. From this, Leclercq concluded that these words did not make one think of oral preaching, but of a literary composition, of something reworked.<sup>16</sup> The crucial passage reads:

I am having copied a few sermons I wrote recently on the first verses of the Song of Solomon, and as soon as they are ready I will send them to you.<sup>17</sup>

It seems to me that these words are not incompatible with Bernard writing about something which he had first preached and later dictated, transcribed and would, in time, edit. After all, if he were to be able to send something which he had preached to someone else, it would have had to go through the processes mentioned, or something very close to them. With the technology of his day, there was no other way in which he could proceed. It is surely wrong also to take the words “*in quo opere*”, as Leclercq had understood them, to exclude meaning that Bernard might continue to “give talks to his monks”.

A second letter written later to the same Carthusian also struck Leclercq. There Bernard wrote:

I am sending you the sermons on the beginning of the Song of Solomon, as you have asked me to do and as I have promised. When you have read them, I beg you to write as soon as you conveniently can and tell me whether you think I should continue with them or not.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Recueil* 1:194. Leclercq, “Intro.” viii–ix. I give my version above p. 297.

<sup>17</sup> “Ep.153”, par.2, ll.16–9, *SBO* 7:360: *Sermones paucos in principio Canticorum Salomonis, recens dictatos, en facio transcribi et tibi, cum necdum ediderim, quam citius mitto. In quo opere, CUM ACCEPERO TEMPUS* [Ps. 74, 3], *Christo imperante curis, tentabo procedere, si tamen me inde confortes*. Leclercq cited the Migne edition since the new one was not available in 1955: I use the translation of Bruno Scott James, *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux* (London, 1953) 229: his “as soon as they are ready”, slightly misses the point of *cum necdum ediderim*.

<sup>18</sup> “Ep.154”: ll.17–20, *SBO* 7:361: *Sermones super principia Canticorum, quos tu petiisti et ego promiseram, transmitto tibi, quibus lectis, peto ut, quam citius opportune poteris, tuo rescripto moneamur vel ad procedendum, vel ad supersedendum*. Scott James, *Letters*, 230.



We may agree with Leclercq when he suggests that these words show that Bernard was ready "to give up his project if, in his friend's opinion, this would be for the best". But this surely does not necessarily mean that he was referring to something which was "quite other than a series of talks begun for the chapter at Clairvaux".<sup>19</sup> Bernard, by the time he began this series of sermons in the mid 1130s, was surely well aware that there would be readers for sermons which he gave to his own monks should he decide that they were worth polishing up. He was by then an extremely well-known figure across much of western Europe.

2. [2, 196] When another friend of Bernard's, Aimo of Bazoches, canon of Châlons-sur-Marne, wrote to ask for a copy of these same sermons he referred to them as *liber iste vester*, that book of yours.<sup>20</sup> According to Leclercq no one ever called any other sermons which Bernard wrote a book, so he counted it as an indication that these sermons were a literary composition, rather than the result of something first preached. This seems rather more convincing. But the very manuscripts show that the sermons circulated in substantial collections, never, I think, fewer than twenty-three, which must have made up something reasonably called a book.<sup>21</sup> It also seems to me conceivable that this set of sermons became called a book just because they were intended to deal with a complete book of the Bible, something not true of any other set of Bernard's sermons.

3. [4, 198] Leclercq then discussed what Geoffrey of Auxerre wrote in his contribution to that composite and complex text the *Vita Prima* of the saint. He noted that Geoffrey mentions these sermons during his treatment of Bernard's written works and not in his earlier discussion of Bernard's qualities as a preacher. This indicated to Leclercq that Geoffrey considered that the sermons belonged not to Bernard's preaching but to his literary activity.<sup>22</sup> This conclusion seems to me to involve two different misunderstandings of what Geoffrey wrote.

At the end of Book III, Geoffrey did indeed follow a classic pattern, moving from a discussion of Bernard's virtuous life to his

<sup>19</sup> Leclercq, "Intro." ix.

<sup>20</sup> Leclercq, "Intro." xi. This letter was included by Mabillon among Bernard's. See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistolae*, "Ep.483," PL 182, 692A. It is not in the new edition.

<sup>21</sup> *SBO* 1:xxvi-xxx for a useful summary table.

<sup>22</sup> Leclercq, "Intro." xiii.

writings (*suis ille libris*), but he does so not to list them but to show how those very works show the same qualities which were apparent in his life. So he argues:

If one wanted to know what a good judge and investigator Bernard was, one should turn to his first work on *Humility*. If one wanted to appreciate his spirituality then one should turn to the *Homilies in Praise of the Virgin Mother* and to his book on *The Love of God* ... His devout "preaching" of the holiness of someone else could be found in the *Life of St Malachy*, whilst his wonderful pursuit of mysteries and building up of morals was clear in the *Sermons on the Song*.<sup>23</sup>

Clearly Geoffrey knew that these sermons formed a book, but it does not follow that he thought that they had not been preached. We should also note that Geoffrey typifies Bernard's preaching skills by referring to a text, the *Life of Malachy*, which is not a sermon (unlike the sermons which Bernard preached about Malachy immediately after his burial, and later on an anniversary of his death), and is far too long for anyone to have read aloud to a community at one sitting on the feast day. It is also significant that it was addressed to the Irish abbot who had pressed Bernard to write it, and that Bernard described it as a "narrative" (*narrationem*).

Geoffrey's earlier discussion of Bernard's preaching ability occurs, as Leclercq correctly noted, in his treatment of Bernard's virtues and qualities.<sup>24</sup> It certainly omits any mention of the sermons, but it does not follow that Geoffrey dismissed them as not belonging to Bernard's preaching, and this is for two reasons. In the first place, Geoffrey's aim turns out to be to discuss Bernard as someone who was able to adjust what he said to his audience, who expected no reward, and who used the Bible in his speech. The first of these skills had been emphasized for a preacher since at least the time of Gregory the Great,<sup>25</sup> but what is striking is that Geoffrey fails to illustrate the point by referring to any particular sermon, or series of sermons, which Bernard gave. Instead, he quotes passages from two highly literary works: *De consideratione*,

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<sup>23</sup> *Vita Prima*, Bk.3, chap.8, PL 185 320B/D.

<sup>24</sup> *Vita Prima*, Bk.3, chap.3, PL 185 306-8.

<sup>25</sup> St Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Care*, trans. Henry Davis, *Ancient Christian Writers* 11 (London 1950) Part 3, prologue, 89: *Wherefore, the discourse of a teacher should be adapted to the character of the hearers, so as to be suited to the individual in his respective needs, and yet never deviate from the art of general edification.*

and the *Office for the feast of St Victor*.<sup>26</sup> Geoffrey's concern, turns out, I suggest, not to be with the spoken or preached word but with Bernard's gift with language.

Secondly, in a third passage, unmentioned by Leclercq, there is a clear reference to one of the sermons on the Song of Songs, where Geoffrey implies that it was "given" at a particular moment to the community at Clairvaux. This comes at the beginning of Book Four:

As in Sermon number twenty-four on the Song of Songs the servant of God Bernard of Clairvaux rejoiced, and gave thanks to Him, that He looked more serenely on him on his third return from the City ...<sup>27</sup>

The words take up the very opening of the sermon itself, and Geoffrey goes on to tell how Bernard was received with joy by the French church because he brought news of the end of the schism. If Geoffrey thought that the sermons were a mere "book" in which references to actual events were inserted to give verisimilitude, I find it hard to believe that he would have brought this sermon into his account because it depends for its effect on telling of things that did happen. I find it much more likely that he knew that Bernard had actually spoken the words on his return, even though he also knew that the words had been written down and referred to them in such a way that any of his own readers could easily look them up.

#### B. *Evidence within the sermons*

4. [3, 196–7] Leclercq noticed that Sermons 65 and 66 were written in reply to a request made by Everwin of Steinfeld around 1144, troubled by heresy in the Rhineland. So for him these sermons were not addressed to the monks of Clairvaux but were written down as a means through which Bernard could give doctrinal teaching.<sup>28</sup> To this argument one can make two replies.

Firstly, both sermons read as though they were preached, with

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<sup>26</sup> Mabillon wrongly identified the second with the Office for the Feast of Malachy. Chrysogonus Waddell kindly pointed out to me where the passage is to be found: "Officium de sancto Victore," *SBO* 3:501–8, at 503, l.20.

<sup>27</sup> *Vita Prima*, Bk.4, chap.1, PL 185 321. For "Sermon 24", see *SC.*, "Ser.24", par.1, ll.5–8, *SBO* 1:151; for English translation see *SoSS* 2:42.

<sup>28</sup> Leclercq, "Intro." xii–xiii.

references to the audience, to whom at least one rhetorical question is posed: *Quid iudicatis, fratres?*<sup>29</sup> Secondly, I doubt whether we can be as sure, as Leclercq seems to have been, that monks at Clairvaux itself may not have been troubled by the same issues as Everwin. Clairvaux by this time had one daughter house in the Rhineland, Himmerod in the diocese of Trier founded 1134, and so some of its monks could well have wanted to know what questions might have been disturbing their fellows. They themselves, indeed, can scarcely have been unaware that heretical ideas were being propagated within Champagne itself. In 1145, that is to say just about the time of Eberwin's letter, the clergy of Liège complained to Pope Lucius II that preachers based in a village in Champagne were spreading heresy.<sup>30</sup> Three years later in 1148 this same area alarmed the Council of Reims.<sup>31</sup> Bernard may, therefore, have been responding to Eberwin in these two sermons, but this does not exclude that he would also have been addressing matters of much closer, local concern.

5. [5, 198–9] Leclercq noticed that Bernard often refers to his public in the second person singular, not in the second person plural as one would have expected him to do if he were speaking to an audience. A considerable issue is raised here which could easily occupy a whole paper. Space requires that here I present it somewhat baldly.

First, Leclercq cited eight sermons to illustrate the point (23, 25, 28, 30–31, 33, 40, 71), but did not mention that in no less than six of them Bernard also used the second person plural (23, 25, 28, 30, 33, 71). To underline this point, one may cite three examples in Latin from the first of this series, Sermon 23:

*Quod scio, non invidéo vobis, nec subtrahó; quod nescio, doceat vos qui docet hominum scientiam. Dixi et meministis ...*<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> SC, "Ser.65," par.7, l.26, SBO 2:176. See too the opening of Sermon 65: *Duos vobis super uno capitulo disputavi sermones; tertium in eodem paro, si audire non taedeat. Et necessarium reor. Nam quod ad nostram quidem spectat domesticam vineam, quae vos estis...* SC, "Ser.65," par.1, ll.5–8, SBO 2:172.

<sup>30</sup> R.I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent* (London, 1977) 171.

<sup>31</sup> Jean-Pierre Poly and Eric Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation 900–1200*, trans. Caroline Higgitt (New York/London, 1991) 278–9 (including map), originally *La mutation féodale: x<sup>e</sup>–xii<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1980).

<sup>32</sup> SC, "Ser.23," par.9, ll.23–4, SBO 1:144. The following translation is SoSS 2, 33: *What I do know I do not begrudge you or withhold from you; what I do not know may "he who teaches men knowledge" [Ps. 93:10] supply to you. You remember that I have said ...*

*Sed audite quousque pervenerim, aut me pervenisse putaverim. Neque enim iactantiae deputandum est, quod in vestros pando profectus ...* [but he then continues with the singular] *Sentisne in his verbis sanctam animam ...*<sup>33</sup>

*In hoc arcanum et in hoc sanctuarium Dei, si quem vestrum aliqua hora sic rapi et sic abscondi contigerit ...*<sup>34</sup>

Second, the exclusive use of the singular throughout Sermons 31 and 40 may be explicable on grounds of their intimate subject matter: they deal with the Groom's approach to the individual soul, and its behavior towards him. One may note an apostrophe to the soul in Sermon 40 paragraph 4 beginning, *O sancta anima...*<sup>35</sup>

Third, although I have not analyzed the whole series, a careful reading of the first and last ten, with some additional sampling, shows that Bernard normally used the plural, and employed the singular much less frequently. He seems to have chosen it on occasions when he wanted to emphasize the point he was making to each individual in his audience. The same usage was observed by Beverly Kienzle in Bernard's summer sermons, when she helpfully suggested that "you each" might be the best translation for such singulars.<sup>36</sup> It is particularly striking that he sometimes switches from singular to plural, or the reverse, in successive sentences. This occurs in the second extract from Sermon 23 already cited above, to which we may add two further examples:

*An vero sine timore Dei et sine humilitate de salute praesumas, tu videris. Bene fecistis grunniendo significare quod minime ita sapiatis ...*<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> SC, "Ser.23," par.11, ll.24–5, SBO 1:145–6. SoSS 2, 35: *But I shall tell you how far I have advanced, or imagine that I have advanced; and you should not accuse me of boasting, because I reveal it solely in the hope of helping you ... Dost thou gather from these words that the holy soul ...*

<sup>34</sup> SC, "Ser.23," par.16, ll.26–7, SBO 1:149. SoSS 2, 40: *If it should ever happen to one of you to be enraptured and hidden away in this secret place, this sanctuary of God....* See also SC, "Ser.25, 28, 30, 33, 71," respectively in, SBO 1:169, par.9, ll.3–4; 192, par.1, l.14; 210, par.1, l.9 and 216, par.10, l.24; 234, par.2, l.25; 2:217, par.5, l.15.

<sup>35</sup> SC, "Ser. 40," par.4. l.1, SBO 2:27.

<sup>36</sup> Kienzle, *Sermons for the Summer Season*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> SC, "Ser.36," par.7, ll.10–2, SBO 2:8. [In this and all cases where the translator has translated the second person singular as "you" I have changed it to the singular] SoSS 2, 179: *And whether thou mayest presume to be saved without the fear of God and humility, is for thee to judge. The murmuring that I hear among you shows me quite clearly that this is not your idea of wisdom.*

*Vides amori cedere etiam maiestatem? Ita est, fratres: neminem suspicit amor, sed ne despicit quidem.*<sup>38</sup>

Such switches are also paralleled in the way that Bernard sometimes moves from a plural authorial 'We' to a more intimate 'I'.<sup>39</sup>

Fourth, the question which this switching raises is whether it is typical of a text which arose from preaching, or in something designed originally to be read (though here one must note the important fact that reading in this period often involved listening, as the reader murmured over the words). There can be no certainty I think about the answer, but two things seem significant: the evidence of Bernard's works as a whole, and the existence of precedents for his practice.

My impression is that Bernard overwhelmingly used the second person singular in those works which have no connection with preaching. The only exception of which I know, and it seems to prove a rule, is *De praecepto*; it was addressed to two people, not to one. There all the second person verbs are plural, except in three places where Bernard engages in short discussions with an interlocutor.<sup>40</sup> In sharp contrast the seventeen sermons on *Qui habitat* display exactly the same usage as the *Sermons on the Song of Songs*: the plural predominates, but the singular is present, often in successive sentences.<sup>41</sup> These sermons, that is to say, differ from the non-oratorical works in just the same way as the Song sermons do.

As for precedents, there seem to be many: the point can be illustrated from Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, and from the Rule, to go no further.<sup>42</sup> But this, it may be objected, just shows that the shift was fundamentally a literary device, something done to create an impression of preaching. I have to admit that this could be the case, and the New Testament example cited does occur in what purports to be a report of Jesus's teaching on the mountain. What we may be feeling our way to here is recognizing that

<sup>38</sup> SC, "Ser.59," par.2, ll.10-2, SBO 2:136. SoSS 3, 121: *Dost thou see that even majesty yields to love? That is how it is, brothers. Love neither looks up to nor looks down on anybody.* (Here the "switch" is not in the verb, of course.)

<sup>39</sup> An example occurs at notes 51 and 52 below.

<sup>40</sup> *De praecepto et dispensatione*, par.21, ll.26-8, SBO 3:268; 282, par.41, ll.3-4; 285, par.47, ll.16-7.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. *In Psalmum "Qui habitat"*, "Ser.7," par.15, ll.3-5, SBO 4:424; "Ser.13," par.2-3, ll.16-25, SBO 4:465.

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Prov. 1:8 singular; Prov. 1:22 plural; Matt. 5:1-22 plural; Matt. 5:23 singular; Matt. 5:27 plural; Matt. 5:29 plural; RB, prol. 1-23 singular, 24, 39 plural.

stylistic considerations alone may not tell us definitely whether a text was the result of the study, or the pulpit. This is a point to which I shall return.

Fifth, now come two passages where Bernard, according to Leclercq, seems to be addressing the reader of his sermons, rather than the listener. I take them in the order they occur in the sermons. The first comes from Sermon 51:

*Scio me hunc locum in libro de dilectione Dei plenius explicuisse, et sub alio intellectu: potiorine an deteriori, lector iudicet, si cui utrumque videre placuerit.*<sup>43</sup>

This may be translated:

I know that I have explained this passage more fully in my book on the *Love of God*, and under a different understanding. Whether it is better or worse, the reader may judge according to which seems the more pleasing to him.<sup>44</sup>

The issue here is does “the reader” here mean the reader of the sermons, or the reader of the *Love of God*, to which an original hearer of the sermons could have turned? I think the second meaning is as plausible as the first, though Leclercq only considers the first.

The second passage occurs in the opening paragraph of Sermon 71. Leclercq only cited one phrase, *Tu ergo qui haec audis vel legis*, but it needs to be set in context. Bernard begins by recalling the text with which the previous sermon had ended:

The end of the preceding sermon shall be this one’s beginning. The Bridegroom, then, is a lily, but not a lily among thorns [Song 2:2], for he who has no sins has no thorns [1 Pet. 2:22].<sup>45</sup>

He then goes on to explain that the Bride is the lily among thorns and thus is different from the Groom. Then he turns to his “audience” with the words of which Leclercq gave the first phrase:

Thou then who hearest or readest these words, take care to have lilies in thy soul, if thou wishest to have him who dwells among the lilies dwelling in thee.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> SC, “Ser.51,” par.4, ll.18–20, *SBO* 2:86.

<sup>44</sup> SoSS 3:43. Translation is somewhat altered.

<sup>45</sup> SC, “Ser.71,” par.1, ll.9–11, *SBO* 2:214: *Finis praecedentis sermonis, principium huius. Est ergo lilium Sponsus, sed non LILIUM INTER SPINAS* [Song 2:2], *quoniam spinam non habet qui peccatum non fecit*.

<sup>46</sup> SoSS 4:48. I have altered translation to show the second person singular.

The issue here is whether “*haec*”, just translated as “these words”, refer to what the individual is hearing or reading at that present moment, or to the passage of Scripture which Bernard has cited. For Leclercq, the former answer is inevitable, but he puts it in a very strange way: Bernard is thinking “of the listener at a public reading at least as much as of the scribe writing at his dictation”.<sup>47</sup> I would certainly have not read this remark as addressed to a scribe, and have never come across such an aside. For my own part the context in which Bernard recommends the soul to practice virtue so that Christ may dwell in her, points to “*haec*” referring to the words from the Song of Songs which Bernard has just cited.

The plausibility of this suggestion is strengthened by a third passage, which Leclercq does not comment upon, in which Bernard makes a clear distinction between hearing his sermons and reading other works which he had composed. It comes at the end of Sermon 81:

*Sed de libertate ista sufficient. In libello, quem de gratia et libero arbitrio scripsi, diversa fortassis de imagine et similitudine disputata leguntur, sed, ut arbitror, non adversa. Legistis illa, illa audistis: quoniam magis probanda, vestro iudicio derelinquo ...*<sup>48</sup>

This can be rendered:

Let that be enough about freedom. In the book which I have written on grace and free choice you may find other observations about the image and likeness, but I do not think that they contradict the things which I have been saying. You have read them, and you have heard what I have just said; I leave it to your judgment which is preferable.<sup>49</sup>

Here the contrast, *Legistis illa, ista audistis*, seems clear, and makes me deduce that one can read all the three passages in the same way: that they make sense as something which could have been spoken in a sermon, rather than being indications of a written style, as Leclercq read two of them. I cannot help wondering how he read the third passage, which he must have known well. He might, I suppose, have thought it to have been inserted to give

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SC, “Ser.71,” par.1, ll.18–20 SBO 2:214: *Tu ergo, qui haec audis vel legis, cura habere lilia penes te, si vis habere hunc habitorem liliorum habitantem in te.*

<sup>47</sup> Leclercq, “Intro.,” xv.

<sup>48</sup> SC, “Ser.81,” par.11, ll.13–6 SBO 2:291.

<sup>49</sup> SoSS 4:168.



verisimilitude to the sermon style, but if it were then one must ask whether it would have “worked” for those readers who knew that the words had never been spoken.

6. [6, 199–201] We must consider what, at first sight, might seem to be Leclercq’s strongest piece of evidence. It is in fact a negative circumstance, rather than a piece of evidence in the text itself: there was, according to him, no time in the Cistercian *horarium* for such long sermons, which he thought would have needed an hour to be spoken out loud. This is something which he asserts as a truth so self-evident that he does not even trouble to argue it. We must try a bit harder.

The first issue to consider is, in theory, when could sermons like these have been given. The answer depends upon the Cistercian customary, *Ecclesiastica Officia*, which suggests that sermons were normally given at the time of chapter.<sup>50</sup> In high summer this occurred after Prime, which began around 4:00 A.M. and preceded a work period which started about 5:00 A.M. In winter the sequence was slightly different, the details need not delay us, but in either case there seems to have been less than an hour for chapter and sermon.

Some of Bernard’s *Sermons on the Song of Songs* certainly seem to be longer than anyone could speak in such a space, though others could have been. The average for these sermons is 6.6 pages in the new edition, and by experiment I have found that such a sermon could be preached aloud in about twenty-one minutes. We do not know whether that could have been fitted into the available time, since we can not know how long the other chapter business took.

At this point it is relevant to consider the length of the *Qui habitat* series which were given, as we have already seen, during the very years Bernard was working on the Song of Songs. Their average length is virtually the same: 6.4 pages. This fact gains added significance when set alongside what Bernard himself said towards the end of Sermon 10 on the Psalm.<sup>51</sup> There he confessed that he was afraid he was going to be embarrassed because it was, beyond doubt, the time when Benedict had indicated that they

<sup>50</sup> Danièle Choisselet and Placide Vernet, eds., *Les «Ecclesiastica Officia»” Cisterciens du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Texte latin selon les manuscrits édités de Trente 1711, Ljubljana 31 et Dijon 114 version française. Annexe liturgique, notes, index et tables*, La Documentation Cistercienne 27 (Reiningue, 1989) 190; Louis J. Lekai, *The Cistercians. Ideas and Reality* (Kent State, 1977) 364–6.

<sup>51</sup> *In Psalmum “Qui Habitat”, “Ser.10,”* par.6, ll.5–25, SBO 4:447.

should not be at liberty for a sermon, but for manual work (*non vacationi sermonum, sed operi manuum noscitur assignasse*). He then excused himself by referring to an episode in the *Life of Benedict*, and continued:

However, when we sometimes talk to you contrary to the custom of our order, we are not acting at our own whim, but according to the will of our venerable brothers and fellow abbots, who have enjoined us to do so, while they themselves absolutely do not want to allow this for themselves. After all they know that for us there is another reason and peculiar necessity: I would not speak with you if I could work with you. That kind of word [that is to say work] might be more useful for you, and in any case more satisfactory for my conscience. But that is denied to me, because of my sins which have lead me to this state: you know the weight represented by my many-sided illnesses, and also the lack of time which I have. May I, while speaking but doing nothing, nevertheless obtain a place in the Kingdom of God, even if the smallest one.<sup>52</sup>

Notice first the shift from an authorial plural to a singular in the course of the sentence beginning: "That kind of word".<sup>53</sup> But the crucial point is that it explains how Bernard could have preached long sermons and overrun into the work period: he had permission from his fellow abbots, because he was not well enough to work with his hands. There is no trace of this in the printed statutes of the order, but then those statutes are extremely sparse until the last years of the century. The lack of any other mention of this concession cannot, I am sure, be significant. On the other hand it is puzzling that Bernard inserted his excuse into a sermon which is shorter than the average for the series: it occupies just over five pages in the printed edition. The explanation may be that he did so because having brought Benedict into his argument it was but a step to have his Rule in mind, and to have the questions which some of his monks may have been asking about how he

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<sup>52</sup> In Psalmum "Qui Habitat", "Ser.10," par.6, ll.16–25, SBO 4:447: *Verumtamen quod aliquoties vobis loquimur praeter consuetudinem Ordinis nostri, non nostra id agimus praesumptione, sed de voluntate venerabilium fratrum et coabbatum nostrorum, qui id nobis etiam iniungunt, quod tamen sibi quidem passim nolunt omnino licere: nempe aliam mihi rationem et singularem necessitatem esse noverunt; nec enim modo loquerer vobis, si possem laborare vobiscum. Illud vobis forte efficacius verbum foret, sed et conscientiae meae magis acceptum. Ceterum quando id mihi, peccatis meis exigentibus, et onerosi huius, ut ipsi scitis, tam multiplici infirmitate corporis, et ipsa quoque temporis necessitate negatur, utinam dicens et non faciens, in regno Dei vel minimus merear inveniri.*

<sup>53</sup> See at note 39 above.

could square his following of the Rule with speaking over time. But if he included the excuse when giving one of the shorter sermons, it suggests both that there was not much time available at chapter time, and that his authority from the abbots must have covered him whenever he trespassed upon work periods. The passage, therefore seems to me of the highest significance, and to remove one crucial prop of Leclercq's argument.

But we surely must consider whether this passage could have been inserted to give verisimilitude to the preaching situation which Bernard wanted to convey to his readers. Two different levels of invention could be involved here. Firstly, it seems to me inconceivable that Bernard could have referred to an authorization which he had not received. He would not have invented the excuse: too many people would have known about what the abbots decided for that to make any sense. On the other hand, the reference could have been inserted into his text after it had been preached, but surely that is unlikely, since it would have had little force, little power to convince readers that the sermon had been preached when many of them, especially those at Clairvaux and its daughter houses, would have known that the words had not actually been spoken. In any case, the license which the abbots gave him means that long sermons could have been fitted into the *horarium*.

Two further remarks about this passage must be made. It is very strange that Leclercq himself only once referred to it, in an article published in 1966, where he wrote:

A whole paragraph at the end of the tenth sermon [on *Qui habitat*] is a justification for the prolixity of the text.<sup>54</sup>

This comment nicely avoids mentioning just how Bernard justified his "divine length", to adopt a phrase usually used of Schubert. Secondly, Vacandard seems to be the only scholar who was aware of the significance of Bernard's explanation, writing:

Manual labor being in some senses forbidden to Bernard by the continuing fragility of his health, the abbots, his superiors and

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<sup>54</sup> "L'art de la composition dans les sermons de s. Bernard," *Studi Medievali* 7 (1966) 128-53; reprinted in *Recueil*, 3:137-62, at 144: *Un paragraph entier à la fin du 10<sup>e</sup> sermon sera encore une justification de la prolixité du texte.*

equals, urged him to commit himself to preaching, within the cloister as a kind of useful exercise and work.<sup>55</sup>

Oddly enough, and there are some oddities in this whole story, Vacandard did not cite at that point Sermon 10 in the *Qui habitat* series, though his comment reads like a paraphrase of what Bernard said.<sup>56</sup>

To recapitulate: Leclercq's six arguments for the literary style of *Sermons on the Song of Songs* are not, taken one by one, or as a whole, entirely convincing. Now let me finally turn to the two kinds of evidence which Leclercq discussed, and then dismissed, as signs of oral style.

## II. *Indications of oral style*

1. [II.1, 201–3] Leclercq noted that there are many “lively” passages in the sermons indicating the reaction of the audience, time of day and so on, but claimed that they were inventions. The fact that they often occurred in the opening or closing paragraphs seemed to him to confirm this claim: they were there to set the scene and so give the literary genre of sermon its credibility.

The problem with this claim is how can we be sure which characteristics of a text mark it off as something “literary” or something “preached”? This is the same issue that arose out of the earlier discussion about the use of singular and plurals. Is this kind of distinction one which we can make as certainly as Leclercq did? Indeed, some recent work would suggest that we cannot. Mary Carruthers, for example, wrote that the distinction between “oral” and “written style” has been:

<sup>55</sup> E. Vacandard, *Vie de saint Bernard abbé de Clairvaux*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1920) 1:459: *Le travail manuel lui étant en quelque sorte interdit par l'état toujours précaire de sa santé, les abbés ses supérieurs et ses pairs, l'engagèrent à s'adonner, par manière d'exercice et de labeur utile, à la prédication dans l'intérieur du cloître.*

<sup>56</sup> He cited, but did not quote, the final paragraph as an example of a passage where Bernard interrupted himself to allow the monks to go to work: Vacandard, 1:461, note 2. Beverly Kienzle quotes the words about the Rule enjoining manual labor, but does not give Bernard's excuse: “*Verbum Dei et Verba Bernardi*; The Function of Language in Bernard's Second Sermon for Peter and Paul,” in *Bernardus Magister*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt, Cistercian Studies 135 (Kalamazoo, 1992) 149–59, 157, note 25.

raised to the status of a truism in literary analysis ... [it] is not true. It rests upon a genuine tautology, which causatively associates the stylistic features of a particular text whose compositional conditions are known with its method of composition; those features are then used to "prove" that the text was composed in a particular way.<sup>57</sup>

Much more, if this were not just a short article, could be written at this point, drawing upon the work of anthropologists as well as literary scholars.<sup>58</sup> They certainly suggest that we need to be aware how many of the supposedly "oral" characteristics of medieval writing could be traced back to the influence of the Old and New Testaments. Here I will merely record that my own experience suggests that nowadays preachers often do as Bernard did: they tend to make "lively" comments about the particular circumstances of their preaching at the beginning and end. There is nothing artificial in Bernard's procedure.

In a footnote Leclercq took issue with what he called the "caractère fictice" of some of Bernard's "insertions", citing one at the end of Sermon 3 when Bernard says that he is forced to stop speaking because guests have arrived.<sup>59</sup> Leclercq claimed that "there is very little likelihood" that anyone should have announced this while Bernard was preaching in chapter. But, as Chrysogonus Waddell pointed out to me, *Ecclesiastica Officia*, the Cistercian customary, lays down that if guests arrived the porter had to inform the abbot at once, seeking him everywhere in the monastery, unless the Office or Mass were being celebrated. We can therefore visualize the porter standing at the door to the chapter house and making signs to Bernard, rather than speaking, to indicate the arrivals, in the same way as he was supposed to do at the door of the infirmary.<sup>60</sup>

As for Bernard's lament that this interruption was *diei malitia*, which struck Leclercq as astonishing, Waddell has kindly pointed out to me that Bernard here was following the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Matthew 6:34.<sup>61</sup> The interlinear gloss explains "*diei*" as such:

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<sup>57</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990) 210.

<sup>58</sup> E.g., Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge, 1977); Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London and New York, 1982). John Arnold kindly drew these books to my attention.

<sup>59</sup> *Recueil* 1:202, note 5, citing SC, "Ser.3," par.6., ll.23-6, SBO 1:17.

<sup>60</sup> *Ecclesiastica Officia*, cap. 120, nos. 8 and 15, 334.

<sup>61</sup> *Bibliorum sacrorum cum Glossa Ordinaria et Nicholai Lyrani expositionibus, literalibus et moralibus*, 5 vols. (Lyons, 1545) 5:27v. I have not been able to consult the

The day is not bad, but in it are bad things: "the evil", [means] not sin, but the conditions of the world.<sup>62</sup>

The same points are extended in the marginal gloss:

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." That is to say that each time has its own cares. That this care is called evil, that is to say a certain bad punishment [means] that in the state of innocence man would not have disdained to bear such care.<sup>63</sup>

This last idea, that such care was not known by mankind before the Fall, follows Augustine's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>64</sup> So Bernard was using "*malitia*" in a traditional and in-offensive way, as he broke off his preaching so that he could carry out his abbatial functions.

2. [II.2, 204–5] The second pointer to the sermons having been spoken which Leclercq mentions is a passage from the beginning of Sermon 54. I give the Latin first, then a translation:

*Super eodem capitulo, quod hesterno sermone versatum est, dicturus sum alium intellectum, quem hodierno servavi; vos autem probate, et eligite potiora. Non est opus superiora repetere, quae excidisse non arbitror in tam brevi. Si quominus tamen, scripta sunt ut dicta sunt, et excepta stilo, sicut et sermones ceteri, ut facile recuperetur quod forte exciderit.*<sup>65</sup>

Today I am going to propose another interpretation of the same verse that was dealt with in yesterday's sermon. Think them over and choose the better. There is no need to repeat yesterday's points, they could not have been forgotten so soon. But in case they have been, they were written down as they were delivered, taken down by pen like the other sermons, so that what may slip the memory may easily be recovered.<sup>66</sup>

Leclercq commented that the "*ut*" before "*dicta*" in the final sentence, just translated "as"—could not mean at the time because there was no type of shorthand quick enough to cope with Bernard's flow. "*Ut*" therefore meant "as though". I find this unconvincing.

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recent scholarly edition.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*: *Dies malus non est, sed in eo sunt mala: "malicia": Non peccatum, sed angustia seculi.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*: *Sufficit diei malicia sua: id est cuilibet tempori sollicitudo sua. Que quidem sollicitudo dicitur malicia, quam est quoddam malum poene in statu enim innocentie non indignisset homo tali sollicitudine.*

<sup>64</sup> Augustine, *De sermone Domini in monte*, Liber II, cap.17, par.55–6, PL 34, 1293–95. I am grateful to Hilary Costello for helping me here.

<sup>65</sup> SC, "Ser.54," par. 1, ll.10–5, SBO 2:102.

<sup>66</sup> SoSS 3:68.

Latinists whom I have consulted have unanimously said that in the present context "*ut*" can only mean "as", i.e., "at the time". Stock, one of the few to have commented on the passage since Leclercq wrote, certainly reads it to mean "as".<sup>67</sup> The second part of Leclercq's argument, about the technology required, does not merit much confidence either. In the first place, we may note that Bernard may have meant no more than that the *intellectum* of the previous sermon had been recorded at the time, rather than every word which he had said. Secondly we may note the implication of some notes made by a pupil of Hugh of St Victor's of his lectures *De divinitate* which Bischoff printed some years ago.<sup>68</sup> There the student Laurentius says that he made notes on wax tablets as Hugh spoke, and then took them to the master to be corrected. This suggests that note-taking techniques were adequate to get down the main sense of what was said at the very period when Bernard was speaking. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bernard clearly expected he would have such note-takers in his audience.

Leclercq makes another attack on the obvious meaning of this passage, by drawing attention to the fact that it could only refer to the first form of the sermons, represented in a group of manuscripts associated with Morimond, rather than later versions where there are many differences from the Morimond version, and where one passage is repeated three times. Bernard could not have been claiming that he said the same thing three times to his audience. This question seems something of a red herring. It is quite clear that Bernard reworked his sermons at various points, particularly after his return from his travels in Italy in 1137–8: it was then that the repetitions to which Leclercq referred occurred. What Bernard was doing in Sermon 54 was referring to the situation which obtained as he was giving that particular sermon, which presumably occurred whenever he preached: he does not exclude the possibility that he was going to rework the notes taken of it, or those of any other sermon, at some later time.

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<sup>67</sup> Stock, *Implications*, 409.

<sup>68</sup> Bernard Bischoff, "Aus der Schule Hugos von St Victor," in *Geisteswelt des Mittelalters. Studien und Texte. Martin Grabmann zur Vollendung des 60 Lebensjahres von Freunden und Schülern gewidmet*, ed. Anton Hiersmann (Münster, 1935) 246–50, reprinted in his *Mittelalterliche Studien*, II (Stuttgart, 1967) 182–7. M.B. Parkes has commented on Bischoff's discovery, "Tachygraphy in the Middle Ages," *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 3 (1989) 159–69, at 160.

To recapitulate again: Leclercq's arguments trying to demolish the evidence for the actual delivery of the sermons do not stand up. Beyond this, and finally, we need to take into account recent work on the way that authors in Bernard's time composed.

I have in mind here that remarkable book by Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*.<sup>69</sup> It seems to me that she has demonstrated that authors were capable of preparing elaborate works by mental processes, above all by the use of a trained memory, and then were ready either to dictate them or to preach them. It is therefore entirely possible that Bernard prepared himself for preaching by composing and storing in his memory. One can not exclude that he may have taken brief notes with him into the chapter house from which he refreshed his memory or recalled into consciousness what he had prepared. He had then the flexibility to respond to his audience or to unexpected events, and to diverge from his original theme (though diversions may have been part of his art too, as M.B. Pranger has shown in his recent book.<sup>70</sup> Among his audience were some who took notes. Afterwards with their help he recreated what he had actually said, no doubt altering it here and there to improve it for later readers (who would be also in a sense hearers), and then dictated that recreation to scribes. Later still the revision process continued as Bernard had further second thoughts, the manuscripts show this clearly, and interestingly enough the community which had originally heard the sermons touched up the text even after Bernard was dead.<sup>71</sup>

Fundamentally, therefore, the evidence shows us that the *Sermons on the Song of Songs* were preached to the community at Clairvaux, and that the text we have grows out of what Bernard actually said. It may be that these arguments also have implications for the shorter sermons, parables or sentences which originally made Leclercq develop his new view. Such "writings" now

<sup>69</sup> See note 56 above

<sup>70</sup> M.B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 56 (Leiden, 1994), passim and especially 10-1; Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 338, note 68: Bernard's "artful memoria which, when properly designed and adequately stored, allows for what one might call planned-in-advance-spontaneous craft".

<sup>71</sup> See Leclercq's discussion in *SBO* 1:xliv-lx, and in his two earlier articles, "Les étapes de la rédaction," and "La recension de Clairvaux," in *Recueil* 1:213-44, 245-74. My impression from reading Leclercq is that the revisions did not usually extend the length of these sermons significantly, but did make many stylistic changes.



begin to look as though they are the unrevised notes taken by some of his listeners. Bernard himself, apparently, never decided that he needed to dictate and edit them. There is nothing odd about this, as Leclercq seemed to think there was:<sup>72</sup> many a preacher over the centuries must have decided that only a part of his preaching was worth the work of editing and publication, either in manuscript or printed form.<sup>73</sup> I believe that this examination restores to us an important truth about Bernard, that he was an outstanding orator, able to speak at length and in a complex manner, apparently *extempore*, though that was part of his art. We can replace his speaking back to the chapterhouse rather than to his study, so to say. In addition we do not any longer have to think of him as an inventor, who artfully included picturesque but imaginary fictions into his text to give it verisimilitude.

If my arguments have some force than it may be that when we look at sermons by others we need to erase from our minds most of the matters which Leclercq seemed to have established about Bernard's sermons. We need then to reassess the time available to any preacher, to consider the kinds of preparation he (or very occasionally she) might have made, and the techniques available to some in the audience to take down what they heard. Lastly, we may need to have a degree of skepticism about how far stylistic considerations will enable us to make a distinction between "oral" and "literary" texts.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Recueil* 1:200–1: *Mais pourquoi environ deux cents fois dans sa vie, et deux cents fois seulement, Bernard aurait-il prononcé au chapitre de Clairvaux les SC et les quelque 120 grands sermons solennels pour l'année liturgique dont nous possédons le texte rédigé, alors que d'habitude il livrait à ses moines des exhortations familières dont le texte ne nous a pas été conservé, si ce n'est quand nous en possédons des reportations résumés sous forme de sentences ou de «sermons brefs»?*

<sup>73</sup> Dr Alexandra Walsham has drawn my attention to the unwillingness of Protestant preachers in seventeenth-century England to prepare their sermons for printing. See Alexandra Walsham, "Aspects of Providentialism in Early Modern England" (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge, 1995) 49–62.

<sup>74</sup> I am grateful to colleagues and students in Sheffield, Reading, and Exeter, as well as members of the Downside Colloquium, Professor Jane Sayers and Professor David d'Avray, for many helpful comments and suggestions which had added much to this paper. Chrysogonus Waddell read it at an early stage when his help was crucial. Its faults remain my responsibility.

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KILLING TIME:  
AN ESSAY ON THE MONASTIC NOTION OF SPEED

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*Oceanic texts*

One of the foremost characteristics of monastic sermons seems to be their timelessness. In an endless process of rumination and repetition the monastic preacher can be seen to elaborate on biblical texts. Like a solid, unmoveable building, this textual structure represents presence rather than motion, eternity rather than time. This is not to say that dynamics are altogether lacking. However static and predictable most of the exegetical techniques may be, this does not prevent more creative preachers from deftly weaving texts into textures that show the boundless opportunities of the ruminative process without running the risk of turning into arbitrariness, or into mere chaos. But are those dynamics to be called time? Or, to put it less straightforwardly, do those dynamics contain an element of time? If so, how is the notion of time related to the timeless nature of eternity, the reality of which is what the monk strives for and the image of which is what he departs from. As for the preaching and listening monk, he seems caught in between those two levels of timelessness, his sinful state and his unfulfilled desires notwithstanding.

In order to illustrate this complicated situation in which the monastic preacher and reader find themselves, let us look at their most prominent spokesman and at the most quintessentially monastic work ever written: Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*. In it Bernard offers an uninterrupted commentary in which, on the surface level, texts and words from the Song of Songs function as markers to indicate the linear progress the preacher is making. Thus the phrase, *Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth*, sets into motion a series of no less than sixteen sermons.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* which appear in volumes 1 and 2 of

The technique is well known. First, the biblical text is reduced to the nucleus of one single word: "kiss"/*osculum*. Next this word, like a gun shot, triggers ever widening clusters of associative meanings. Once an exhaustive rumination has been achieved, the next verse can be announced and dealt with, and so on, and so forth. So much then for the inner-textual rhythm. But what about time?

It is far from clear to what extent the *Sermons on the Song of Songs* are to be read as one single work. Apart from sets of sermons such as the first sixteen ones which are tied together by a common theme—"the kiss"—no basic principle of coherence can be detected. Yet the whole cannot be reduced to its parts: the former does have a breath, a tempo, and a continuity of its own which reaches beyond the independent status of each separate sermon.

First there is the suggestion of continuity when Bernard closes off a sermon with the phrase "enough for today" or begins another one by referring back to "yesterday's theme".<sup>2</sup> Those endings sometimes playfully point to a certain boredom on the part of the audience some of whom have dozed off in spite of the abbot's mellifluous words.<sup>3</sup> On other occasions, the arrival of guests is presented as an excuse to break off what in principle could be continued forever.<sup>4</sup> In other words, ending a sermon is a matter of necessity imposed on the preacher by the laws of external time and events. It is, however, not an intrinsic part of the sermon itself.

This sense of continuity Bernard hints at when in Sermon 24 he addresses his monks on his return from Rome—the third one in a row.<sup>5</sup> After having settled the Leonine schism he is once more available for his monks to fulfill the professional duties of an abbot: to take care by means of preaching, among other things, of the souls of his community. Even though the long break might suggest that a fresh start is to be preferred it seems much better to pick up where he had left off, i.e., to resume the interrupted delivery of

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*SBO* will be cited as *SC*, *SBO*.] See *SC*, "Ser. 1–16," *SBO* 1:3–98.

<sup>2</sup> *SC*, "Ser. 1," par.12, ll.13–14, *SBO* 1:8; *SC*, "Ser. 5," par.10, ll.1–3, *SBO* 1:26; *SC*, "Ser. 14," par.9, ll.26–30, *SBO* 1:74; *SC*, "Ser. 31," par.10, ll.3–8, *SBO* 1:226.

<sup>3</sup> *SC*, "Ser. 36," par.7, ll.15–24, *SBO* 2:8.

<sup>4</sup> *SC*, "Ser. 3," par.6, ll.22–26, *SBO* 1:17.

<sup>5</sup> *SC*, "Ser. 24," par.1, ll.5–7, *SBO* 1:151: *Hoc demum tertio, fratres, reditum ab Urbe nostrum clementior oculus e caelo respexit, et vultus tandem serenior desuper arrisit nobis.*

his sermons. That is all he has to say by way of re-introducing himself. Now it is back to business:

If I am correct the text where I should start today is: *The just love you* [Song 1:3].<sup>6</sup>

Yet another interruption presents itself in Sermon 26<sup>7</sup> when Bernard, after a failed attempt to continue yesterday's exposition of the text, "as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon" (Song 1:4), is forced to break off his sermon because of his outburst into tears over the recent death of his brother Gerard. In Sermon 27 he is, however, once more back on track.<sup>8</sup> Now that the emotional balance has been restored, it is possible to picture the beloved, absent brother as "wrapped in the curtains of Solomon",<sup>9</sup> thus picking up the thread which had been momentarily broken.

The ultimate and crudest intrusion of external time is, of course, death itself: not the death of the beloved one which, however cruel, did not keep Bernard from continuing his job, but the death of the preacher himself which relentlessly turns Bernard's work into the corpus it has remained ever since, for Bernard of Clairvaux died in 1153 before completing his *Sermons on the Song of Songs*. Just as in Sermon 24 Bernard brings back to mind the text he had been discussing before his departure for Rome, so in his final sermon, Sermon 86, he now closes off a long excursion about the "the bed"/*lectulum* of the bridegroom. As if by coincidence, Schubert-like sounds of night and darkness do indeed turn this long symphony into an effectively unfinished one:

So much about the bed. What then is more manifest about the night of ignorance than what the same poet [David] says in another Psalm: "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness" [Ps. 81:5]. This text certainly expresses the ignorance of the entire human race in which all are born. In my opinion it is this ignorance which the Apostle admits to be born in and from which he gives praise to God to be delivered when he says: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness" [Col. 1:13]. That is why he said: "We are not children of the night and

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<sup>6</sup> SC, "Ser. 24," par.2, ll.1-2 SBO 1:152: *Locus autem unde incipere debemus, ni fallor, id est: RECTI DILIGUNT TE* [Song 1:3].

<sup>7</sup> SC, "Ser. 26," SBO 1:169-81. Cf. M.B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought. Broken Dreams*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 56 (Leiden/New York, 1994) 163-206.

<sup>8</sup> SC, "Ser. 27," SBO 1:181-92.

<sup>9</sup> SC, "Ser. 27," par.1, l.24, SBO 1:181: ... *quod opertum illis pellibus sentio*. The Song of Songs text (1:4) is: *Sicut tabernacula Cedar, sicut pelles Salomonis*.

darkness" [1 Thess. 5:5]. In the same vein he addresses all elect by saying: "Walk as the children of light" [Eph. 5:8].<sup>10</sup>

There is a tendency on the part of the modern reader to take the form and structure of a work such as the *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, or rather the lack of it, for granted. Why bother about continuity or discontinuity as long as the wealth of themes and information enables readers to appropriate from those sermons, as from a horn of plenty, whatever suits them; by so doing, such readers seem to have history on their side. First there is the long history of *florilegia*. In it no attention was paid to the integrity of texts. On the contrary, the selection and the consequent use of an infinite number of items prevailed over the reading of the text in its entirety. Moreover, the emergence of scholastic thought coincided with Bernard's writing of his *magnum opus*. In spite of the former's claim of universality and completeness, it preferred the fragmentation of the argument over the integrity of uninterrupted nature and form of monastic rumination. As for modern readers, they are neither required nor prepared to sit through those sermons in the same way as the twelfth-century monk. This is not to say, of course, that I pretend exactly to know how the process of listening or reading has worked. The question, for instance, whether or not Bernard's sermons were really delivered in chapter in their present shape<sup>11</sup> is Christopher Holdsworth's province rather than mine.<sup>12</sup> Yet, whatever the outcome of that discussion,<sup>13</sup> themes such as length, rhythm, continuity, etc., are of the utmost importance because they are linked to the control center of the monastic mind: memory. Further, as we know from Augustine, memory, in turn, cannot be thought without time: the two are inextricably

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<sup>10</sup> SC, "Ser. 86," par.4, 11.3–10, SBO 2:320: *Atque id quidem de lectulo. Iam de ignorantiae nocte quid manifestius, quam quod in alio identidem loquitur Psalmo: NESCIERUNT NEQUE INTELLERUNT, IN TENEBRIS AMBULANT* [Ps. 81:5], *pro certo exprimens ipsam, in qua nati sunt, totius humani generis ignorantiam? Ipsa est, ut opinor, cui se beatus Apostolus et fatetur natum, et gloriatur ereptum, dicens: QUI ERUIT NOS DE POTESTATE TENEBRARUM* [Col. 1:13]? *Unde et dicebat: NON SUMUS FILII NOCTIS NEQUE TENEBRARUM* [Eph. 5:8]; *item ad omnes electos: UT FILII, inquit, LUCIS AMBULATE.*

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Jean Leclercq, *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits* 5 vols. (Rome, 1962–92) 1:191–244.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Christopher Holdsworth's article in this volume.

<sup>13</sup> I must admit that I have a stake in Holdsworth's argument insofar as, whilst his being wrong would not undermine my own thesis in progress, his being right would corroborate it.

intertwined.<sup>14</sup> What, then, is the length of a sermon, or, for that matter, of a collection of sermons? How is it measured? How can it be measured without being absorbed and erased by the underlying continuity which, on its way towards eternity, seems to force time and measurement out and which can only be brought to a halt by the death of the author himself?

To get a better grip of the way rhythm and time function in monastic preaching, or, to put it the other way around, the way in which preaching develops *within* time, I would like to give two examples from modern art, the one from music, the other from literature. The Romanian conductor Sergiu Celibadache (1912–96) was famous for his extremely slow tempi. To give an example, his reading of a Bruckner symphony lasted on average twenty minutes longer than other performances of the same work. Listening to it, however, one did not notice this slowness. What came to the fore, was a high degree of clarity conveying to the ear the majestic structure of the piece so as to cause movement and rest almost to coalesce. A similar notion of the relativity of speed can be said to obtain for Bernard's sermons. In Sermon 23,<sup>15</sup> for instance, the reader/listener, observes the girls from the Canticle running (*currere*) towards the "the storeroom"/*cubiculum regis*, alias sleeping room of the king. Yet this motion—not unlike Augustine's restlessness in the *Confessions*—comes to a standstill when later on in the sermon it is absorbed in the *fixum*, the fixed *locus* of God's judgment and mercy. As a result, from a retrospective point of view, the scherzo-like tempo of the beginning of the sermon is slowed down, so to speak, once it has become part—as it has been all along—of the divine stability. How, then, should a sermon such as Sermon 23 on the *Song of Songs* be measured? At what speed does it really run?

The other example is taken from Primo Levi's account of his stay in the hell of Auschwitz, depicted in *If This Is A Man*.<sup>16</sup> One of the ways Levi manages to survive amidst the horror of the concentration camp is by teaching his French friend, Jean, Italian with the help of lines he remembers from Dante. But, unlike the leisurely pace at which Bernard addresses his monks, here time is

<sup>14</sup> Augustine, Books x and xi of the *Confessions*.

<sup>15</sup> SC, "Ser. 23," SBO 1:138–50.

<sup>16</sup> Italian title: *Se questo è un uomo* (Torino, 1947). Cf. P.W.M. de Meijer, *Letterkunde, in het bijzonder de Italiaanse* (Amsterdam, 1997) 16–7.



running out. That is why Levi describes how, while Jean and he carry the soup to the distribution point—their daily job and in itself, like the memory of the lines from Dante, a token of survival—he tries to remember Canto 26 from the *Inferno* about Ulysses's bold attempt to get beyond the pillars of Hercules at the price of an almost certain shipwreck. Fragments of the canto do come back to mind but the complete text keeps eluding. Here narrative and life coincide. With all his power Levi struggles to save the text:

Think of your breed; for brutish ignorance  
Your mettle was not made; you were made men,  
To follow after knowledge and excellence.<sup>17</sup>

Now it becomes a matter of urgency to bring to the surface the rest of text, before he and his companion reach their destination, before death sets in, before:

Over our heads the hollow seas close[d] up.<sup>18</sup>

### *Riverrun*

In my view we have to combine those two examples in order to understand the role of time and speed in monastic preaching. On the one hand, there is retardation, as, for example, in the endless amplifications of allegory which are part and parcel of the sermon genre; retardation becomes so prominent as to make motion indistinguishable from motionlessness. On the other hand, there is an undeniable sense of urgency, produced, as we shall see, by the inner workings—and turmoil—of the monastic memory. To illustrate this point let us turn to the Father of Western monastic preaching, Gregory the Great (†604). In his prefatory letter to Leander in which Gregory presents his *Moralia in Iob*, the famous comparison can be found between the reading of Scripture and the course of a river:

In my commentary I can often be found, as it were to postpone the order of my exposition and pause a little while in the broad field of contemplation and morality. Yet, whoever speaks about God should take care to examine whatever may benefit the behavior of his audience. And for that reason he must not prevent his discourse effectively from flowing away from the main stream if the

<sup>17</sup> Primo Levi, *If This Is A Man; The Truce* (London, 1987) 119.

<sup>18</sup> Levi, *If This Is A Man*, 121.

opportunity of edification demands so. The expositor of the Holy Writ should imitate the way a river flows. For, when a river flows through its bed, hitting on both sides on open valleys, it immediately changes its course. And when it has filled those open spaces sufficiently, it all of a sudden returns to its bed. In the same manner the expositor of the Holy Writ, when discussing any subject whatever, should be willing to change the course of his speech towards a nearby valley if he comes across a suitable occasion for edification. And after he has filled the field of extra instruction sufficiently, he may return to the main course of his exposition.<sup>19</sup>

This passage clearly demonstrates how the principle of retardation works. Supposing that there is no infinite number of possible deviations, progress, however minimal, will never be lacking, even though downstream can no longer be distinguished easily from upstream. This explains why the potential of Scripture can also be expressed in more static terms such as a house or temple. As the subject-matter suggests, Gregory's *Homilies on Ezekiel*<sup>20</sup> is full of references to the permanent structure of a building, in particular when he talks of Ezekiel's vision of the future temple:

And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and a hand breadth [Ezek. 40:5].

Whatever this mysterious text may mean, it is about measuring: measuring life with the reed of Scripture. So doing we simultaneously measure the distance between God and ourselves. Consequently, in one way or another we measure time.

At this juncture of images—one is the flow representing motion, the other is the building representing rest and permanence—we

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<sup>19</sup> *Unde et in eo saepe quasi postponere ordinem expositionis invenior et paulo diutius contemplationis latitudini ac moralitatis insudo. Sed tamen quisquis de Deo loquitur, curet necesse est, ut quicquid audientium mores instruit rimetur, et hunc rectum loquendi ordinem deputet, si, cum opportunitas aedificationis exigit, ab eo se, quod loqui coeperat, utiliter derivet. Sacri enim tractator eloquii morem fluminis debet imitari. Fluvius quippe dum per alveum defluit, si valles concavas ex latere contingit, in eas protinus sui impetus cursum divertit, cumque illas sufficienter impleverit, repente sese in alveum refundit. Sic nimirum, sic divini verbi esse tractator debet, ut, cum de qualibet re disserit, si fortasse iuxta positam occasionem congruae aedificationis invenerit, quasi ad vicinam vallem linguae undas intorqueat et, cum subiunctae instructionis campum sufficienter infuderit, ad sermonis propositi alveum recurat.* Dedicatory Letter to Leander, *Morales sur Job*, ed. Robert Gillet, and trans. André de Gaudemaris, Sources chrétiennes 32 (Paris, 1975) 122.

<sup>20</sup> Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hiezechielem Prophetam*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 142 (Turnhout, 1971).

have an opportunity tentatively to bring together the problem of tempo at the Celibadache's performance of a Bruckner symphony and Primo Levi's story about remembering Dante. Admittedly, we are as yet unable to indicate exactly at what speed the sound that touches our ear is moving. What we do experience, though, is sound which is on the brink of coming to a stand still, of turning into silence. A similar effect is produced by the ever expanding and ever retarding flow of Gregory's river. Yet, improbable though it may seem, in Gregory's writing, that is, in his ever expanding reading of Scripture, a sense of urgency, struggle and violence makes itself felt. Here Primo Levi comes in. Not unlike Levi, Gregory is reconstructing texts, bringing them to the surface from the remote corners of his memory palace. This holds true even if it can be rightly asserted that Gregory when writing his homilies may have had a codex before him. For what counts is, first, the reconstruction of ourselves out of the biblical material at hand and, next, the distance that becomes visible when the measuring reed of Scripture is applied to our lives,

because in it we measure every act of our life, that we may see how much progress we have made or how far we are removed from progress.<sup>21</sup>

To make up for this lack of progress, which in itself is nothing less than a kind of forgetfulness, Scripture has to be read and reread, its text has to be saved, that is, memory has to be re-awakened and it has to be done so in time, before death sets in. As a result, we are able to guess what the meaning of expansion and retardation might be. This leisurely process of reconstructing Scripture in an endless flow of images and configurations is ultimately designed to be cut through, to be shortened by the very same faculty of mind that had taken care of expansion: the contemplative and active lives.

This, then, is the way Gregory diverts the textual stream springing from the already static Ezekielian images of the temple and the measuring reed. The six cubits, turn out to represent the active life corresponding to the six days of the creation and "a hand breadth" the contemplative life. The next moment the hitherto

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<sup>21</sup> Gregory the Great, *In Hiezech. 11, Homilia 2*, in CCSL 142, par.7, ll.167–169, 229: ... *quia in ipsa omnem uitae nostrae actionem metimur, ut scilicet uideamus uel quantum proficimus, uel quantum longe a profectu distamus.*

smooth surface of the homiletic text changes abruptly. Unrest and violence, darkness and blindness are introduced culminating in the evocation of yet another biblical image: Jacob's fight with the angel:

In the contemplative life there is a serious, mental struggle when it erects itself towards the celestial, when it exercises the soul in matters spiritual, when it attempts to transcend all that looks like corporeal, when it narrows itself down in order to widen itself. And sometimes someone conquers, overcoming the reluctant darkness of his blindness in order to touch, secretly and gently, a fragment of the unlimited light. Yet the contemplative mind is forced to rebound and to return to itself immediately. Moving away from that light for which it goes with relief, it goes back to the darkness of its blindness with a sigh. And this is aptly illustrated by sacred history in the story about the blessed Jacob fighting with the angel.<sup>22</sup>

Here we can observe the river of Gregory's scriptural reading hitting upon a deep valley and filling it up before being able to continue. What happens in the process is that a link between the seemingly autonomous text and the human mind is being established. By doing this, Gregory injects a vertical dimension into his discourse. As in a split second the contemplative mind, that is both the author's mind and the reader's mind, changes its shape and size. In his contemplative attempt to reach out for the highest it "narrows itself down in order to widen itself"/*sese angustat ut dilatet*. Inevitably, this narrowing down causes a change in tempo and time, not only in the mind of the contemplator but also in the text through which it exercises its memory. In other words, there is no reason to separate contemplation as soon as it turns "mystical", rapturous or ecstatic, from the text and the textual rhythm and time in which and from which it arises. The "narrowing down" of the soul, the *angustare*, should rather be seen as an increasing sense of textual urgency. Not unlike Levi's fear of failing to remember Dante's life (and text) saving lines about Ulysses in time, the

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<sup>22</sup> In *Hiezech.* 11, *Homilia* 2, 12–13 in CCSL 142, par.12–13, ll.270–279, 232–3: *Est autem in contemplatiua uita magna mentis contentio, cum sese ad caelestia erigit, cum in rebus spiritalibus animum tendit, cum transgredi nititur omne quod corporaliter uidetur, cum sese angustat ut dilatet. Et aliquando quidem uincit et reluctantes tenebras suae caecitatis exsuperat, ut de incircumscripto lumine quiddam furtim et tenuiter attingat, sed tamen ad semetipsam protinus reuerberata reuertitur atque ab ea luce, ad quam respirando transit, ad suae caecitatis tenebras suspirando redit. Quod bene sacra historia designat, quae beatum Iacob cum angelo luctantem narrat.*

contemplative mind contracts itself in order to strike back and touch the unlimited light. No wonder that, in a fashion slightly reminiscent of the end of Bernard's last Song sermon, the brisk moment of catching the light is set against a nocturnal backdrop. Notions such as darkness and blindness are in the air and do not fail to contribute to the *nocturne*-like mood of the piece. In the meantime, the entire episode remains part and parcel of a text, of *sacra historia*, the reading of which is as much of a fight as the lofty act of contemplation.<sup>23</sup>

### *Airborne*

In my view, this intertwining of memory, time, and texts equally obtains what often has been labeled Gregory's mystical vision *par excellence*. When Benedict in Chapter 35 of the *Life of Benedict* looks out of the window of a tower, he sees in a flash the soul of Germanus, bishop of Capua, passing through the air. Here, as in all monastic preaching, notions of space and time are contracted (Germanus appears to have died at a considerable distance from the place where Benedict has his nocturnal vision). As Benedict himself told afterwards (*sicut post ipse narravit*):

The whole world was contracted as in one beam of sunlight and presented before his eyes.<sup>24</sup>

Next Gregory reflects on this event, thus making himself part of it through his mnemonic activities. In other words, the very "reading", meditation, rumination of the event, or whatever one wants to call it, presupposes a listening and re-interpreting mind that participates in the narration, however brief and contracted. Together with Benedict, Gregory, and, imitating him, his readers are able to bring back to memory, to recreate this contemplative activity of focusing, that is, expanding one's soul enabling it to grasp the tiny little world beneath it without for one single moment forgetting this vision's provenance from the *narrated* story that the *vita Benedicti* is and remains:

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<sup>23</sup> This was pointed out some centuries later by Rupert of Deutz in the prologue to his commentary on the Song of Songs. Cf. M.B. Pranger, "Violent Embraces," in *Proceedings of the Conference, The Old Testament in Culture, Prague 1995*, forthcoming.

<sup>24</sup> See note 25 below.

To the soul that sees the Creator every creature is limited (*angusta*). To anyone who sees even a little light of the light of the Creator everything created will become small (*breve*), because in the very light of the intimate vision the inner reaches of the mind are opened up. It is so expanded in God that it stands above the world. The soul of someone who sees in this way is also above itself. When the soul is rapt above itself in God's light, it is enlarged in its interior; while it gazes beneath it, in its high state it comprehends how small that is which it could not comprehend when it was in a lowly state. Therefore, the man who, looking at the fiery globe also saw the angels returning to heaven, without doubt was able to do so only in the light of God. What wonder is it then if he saw the world gathered together before him, he who was lifted up outside the world in the light of the mind? That the world is said to have been gathered together before his eyes is not because heaven and earth was contracted but because the intellectual soul of the one who saw was enlarged. He who is rapt in God can see everything that is beneath God without difficulty. In that light which shone on his external eyes there was an interior light in the mind which showed the intellectual soul or the one seeing (because he had been rapt to higher things) just how limited was everything beneath it.<sup>25</sup>

This, then, is the soul as described in the Homily on Ezekiel which narrows itself down in order to widen itself. The saints or contemplators who find themselves thus contracted and wrapped in the divine have become able, however briefly, to view the world accordingly, that is, as infinitely small. As for the author and reader/listener, they find themselves in a rather ambiguous position. On the one hand, their act of mimetic reading allows them to participate in this moment of unique insight. On the other hand, the very same act of mimetic reading implies that they take

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<sup>25</sup> Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, ed. Adalabert de Vogüé, Sources chrétiennes 260 (Paris, 1979) Book II, c. 35, par. 6–7, 240: *Fixum tene, Petre, quod loquar: quia animae uidenti creatorem angusta est omnis creatura. Quamlibet etenim parum de luce creatoris aspexerit, breve ei fit omne quod creatum est: quia ipsa luce uisionis intimae, mentis laxatur sinus, tantumque expanditur in Deo, ut superior existat mundo. Fit uero ipsa uidentis anima etiam super semetipsam. Cumque in Dei lumine rapitur super se, in interioribus ampliatur, et dum sub se conspicit, exaltata comprehendit quam breue sit, quod comprehendere humiliata non poterat. Vir ergo qui [intueri] globum igneum, angelos quoque ad caelum redeuntes uidebat, haec procul dubio cernere nonnisi in Dei lumine poterat. Quid itaque mirum, si mundum ante se collectum uidit, qui subleuatus in mentis lumine extra mundum fuit? Quod autem collectus mundus ante eius oculos dicitur, non caelum et terra contracta est, sed uidentis animus est dilatatus, qui in Deo raptus uidere sine difficultate potuit omne quid infra Deum est. In illa ergo luce, quae exterioribus oculis fulsit, lux interior in mente fuit, quae uidentis animum quia ad superiora rapuit, ei quam angusta essent inferiora monstrauit.* The translation of this passage is by Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*. Vol. 2: *The Growth of Mysticism* (London, 1994) 72.

in the entire story. Not for one single moment are they allowed to forget the spatial picture of Benedict standing at the window of the tower, watching Germanus fly by. Theirs is a double focus. Like Benedict having their souls expanded in order to grasp the world beneath them, they also look at Benedict looking. As a result, the element of time as derived from the notion of space is also doubled. Just as the vision is spatially framed by the window, so from a temporal point of view it is the result of Benedict's, and, following Benedict, Gregory's mnemonic reconstruction the morning after the night before: *sicut post ipse narravit*. Admittedly, mystical readings tend to sever the link between the dimensions of space and time within the confines of the text on the one hand, and the time and spaceless, mystical experience of the reader on the other. But the irony is that neither author nor reader have the luxury to move out of the flow of images which are permanently being reconstructed by the mind. Consequently, their experience is bound to be an act of remembrance. Were things otherwise, the almost standstill of Bruckner's symphony and Levi's frantic act of bringing words back to mind could not coalesce. Time, tempo, and speed, in short, urgency would be lacking. However slow the river of monastic rumination may flow, such stagnation would be fatal to its survival. Appearances notwithstanding, such failure is never allowed to happen.

The contraction of spatial and temporal notions in the mind are reminiscent of Book x of Augustine's *Confessions*. Of course I am not now discussing the way in which Augustine's thought was passed on to posterity. It is clear that he and Gregory, together with Cassian and others, have helped to shape medieval, monastic thought. In the *Confessions* Augustine describes how, in whatever way images and ideas may have arrived in the mind—images from the outside, ideas having been there all along—it is in the human memory that all of them are resumed and reproduced. Whatever the subject of discussion may be, one's own life as in the *Confessions* or the dreadful state of the human condition as such as in monastic meditation, it is brought back to mind and channeled and purged through a parallel reconstruction—like the reconstruction of a parallel life—of scriptural texts.<sup>26</sup> In a sense this process of mnemonic reproduction can be considered the charter of the

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader: Meditation: Self-Knowledge and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996).

monastic way of meditation and preaching. This being so, it is inevitable not to join Augustine in taking the next step and embed memory in time.

However, while the modern interpreter is quite capable of grasping the mnemonic principle of Augustinian and monastic literature, it is much less easy to articulate the notion of time. Augustine himself admitted to be incapable of solving the contradictions involved. For instance, our memory remembers a melody or a song in its entirety. But once we start reciting it, like Ambrose's hymn *Deus creator omnium*, present time is scattered into past and future. As a result, the present keeps hovering between the past and the future without really taking shape. The effect of this process is quite paradoxical. That which really *is*, i.e., the present which is so close to eternity, does not manifest itself so as to allow itself to be grasped by the human mind. Yet the human mind—more in particular, human memory—is the one and only vehicle capable of measuring and manoeuvring time. Doing so, it keeps both death and eternity at bay, preventing them from killing time in the process, drowning it in the void and depth of an ocean without a shore in sight. At the same time, memory, in the act of (re)producing time by means of remembering, presents the mind with a perspective, like offering a bed to a river. Thus it offers the opportunity for time to develop into the monastic leisure by which it is slowly and gently to be killed.

Transposing this Augustinian set of problems to the issue which occupies us most in this paper—the aspect of time in monastic literature—we are once more faced with the question raised above as to the possibility or impossibility of grasping Bernard's *chef d'oeuvre*, the *Sermons on the Song of Songs* as a whole. Of course, the same question could be asked with regard to the possibility of comprehending Gregory's unstoppable flow of reading and meditation. However, because of the loose way they are connected the *Sermons on the Song of Songs* clearly present the biggest challenge in this context. In view of the complexity of the matter, it may be wise to approach this problem circuitously. So, let us take an example, not from the *Sermons on the Song of Songs* but from a text that, although not being part of the continuous reproduction of the Song text, contains an allusion to it.

In his Letter 256 Bernard writes to the pope about the desperate situation in the Holy Land, urging him to take action:



The waters have risen to the soul of Christ and the pupil of his eye has been violated. Now both swords should be drawn on the occasion of the suffering of the Lord: for once more the Lord suffers on the same spot where he had suffered before. Who else should draw the sword but you [the pope] ... Now a voice is heard of him who cries out: I am coming to Jerusalem to be crucified once more.<sup>27</sup>

In this text the notion of time abounds. The present is made part of the past and vice versa through the (possible) repetition of the Lord's passion, on the same spot, in different times. Next, there is the long stretch of semantic time, which itself absorbs both the past and the (prophetic) future. The reference as such is from the gospel: John the Baptist's lonely cry in the desert: *clamans in deserto*.<sup>28</sup> In Bernard's setting it is Jesus who is crying out, but together with Jesus it is his own prophetic self warning the pope for future disaster. Finally, it should be noted that the gospel text contains another scriptural allusion, not by referring to another text, but by *being* one, thus eliminating the distance of intertextual space and time. In the Song it is the *vox turturis*, the voice of the bridegroom that cries out for the bride (Song 2:8; 2:12). This reading is further corroborated when, a few lines later, the pope himself is addressed as the friend of the bridegroom, the *amicus sponsi*.

Perhaps this tiny little text, *vox clamantis*, gives us a clue as to how to read Bernard's monastic remembering of the Song of Songs. Like Benedict watching the whole world beneath him while inevitably staying part of it, the *vox clamantis*, standing a little aside from the main stream, offers us a glimpse of the never ending flow of the *Sermons on the Song of Songs*. They seem timeless and, like Bruckner's symphony, *presque à la limite du mouvant*. Yet time is running out. In the *angustia* of the *vox clamantis* memory is roused to its feet. Before it is overtaken by death, physical or

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<sup>27</sup> "Ep. 256," par.1, ll.14–16, SBO 8:163–4 and par. 2, ll.4–5, 164: *INTRAVERTUNT AQUAE USQUE AD ANIMAM* [Ps. 68:2] *Christi, tacta est pupilla oculi eius. Exserendus est nunc gladius in passione Domini, Christo denuo patiente, ubi et altera vice passus est. Per quem autem, nisi per vos? ... Vox clamantis: Venio Ierosolymam iterum crucifigi.*

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Matt. 3:3: *In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."* The quotation is from Isaiah 40:3. Interestingly, Bernard recycles a biblical text which itself uses a biblical text.

otherwise, its last call restores time to its proper self. In the Levi-like remembrance of past "texts", motion and rest meet, invisibly and inaudibly. Then it is back to the next sermon, to the past and future that encircle the elusive present of the monastic mind.

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## THE LITURGICAL DIMENSION OF TWELFTH-CENTURY CISTERCIAN PREACHING

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*The preaching office of the abbot*

To speak about the liturgical dimension of twelfth-century Cistercian preaching is not without its hazards. The main problem is the diffusive nature of the liturgy in twelfth-century monastic life. If liturgy is understood as a complexus of sacred signs that somehow render present the realities to which they point, one could say that virtually the whole of the monk's life was comprised under the rubric "liturgical". When the monk was chanting the Divine Office in choir or taking part in the celebration of the conventual Mass, he took for granted that Christ was present and acting through the sacred texts and ritual actions. But Christ was also present and acting when the monk had his feet washed during the weekly Saturday evening *mandatum*; or when he broke his fast in refectory during what was a markedly ritualized meal preceded and followed by prayer, and accompanied by readings from the Scriptures or the Fathers; or when, in the chapter room, he confessed his sins and received forgiveness. Certainly, Christ was present and acting every time he sat in the cloister and gave himself to his *lectio divina*, which by its very nature was an exercise in prayer and meditation. Even the act of putting on his cowl had something "liturgical" about it, because the monk knew that in clothing himself in the monk's proper garment, the cowl—an all-enveloping garment which, with its hood and full-length sleeves, was fashioned in the sign of the cross—he was expressing his oneness with Christ on the cross in the peak moment of the history of redemption.<sup>1</sup> And clearly, if in keeping with the Rule of

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<sup>1</sup> So important was the significance of the cowl that it was worn always and everywhere, except at work. The monk was even expected to die in his cowl. See, for instance, the *Exordium magnum* for the cautionary tale of the

St Benedict, the abbot was believed to be the one who in a special way holds the place of Christ in the monastery,<sup>2</sup> then the abbot's preaching in chapter was meant ideally to be a word communicated by Christ himself. Given the role of the abbot as, so to speak, a "sacrament" of Christ's presence and action in the community, it is hardly surprising that, normally, it was the abbot who was the principal minister of the word within the monastery; and it was the abbot to whom was assigned the duty of preaching in chapter on the principal feasts of the liturgical cycle.<sup>3</sup>

*The sermon as a liturgical act*

Bernard of Clairvaux expressed his own role as servant of the word—and the role of every monastic preacher—in his very first sermon on the Song of Songs: "But who will break [the bread of God's word]?" he asks; and then goes on straightaway to say:

The father of the household is here: Recognize the Lord in the breaking of the bread. For who else is fit to do so? This indeed is a task I would not be so rash as to arrogate to myself...

So Bernard turns to the Lord:

You, who are so faithful and loving, break your bread for those who are hungering, through my hands, should it so please you, but with a power that is yours alone.<sup>4</sup>

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monk who, having died not wearing his cowl, had to come back to life in order to be clothed in his cowl so that he might die as a monk. Konrad of Eberbach, comments that "the monastic habit, in which ... the form of the cross is expressed ... contains a great mystery" (*monachicum habitum ... forma crucis exprimitur ... magnum habere mysterium*). See Konrad of Eberbach, *Exordium magnum cisterciense sive narratio de initio cisterciensis ordinis*, ed. Bruno Griesser, *Distinctio V*, Cap. 3, *Series Scriptorum S. Ordinis Cisterciensis* (Rome, 1961) 2:277. Konrad also refers to a frequently quoted text from the *Vitae Patrum*, Libellus I, note 9 (PL 73, 994), which describes the monastic habit as being invested with the same grace as the sacrament of baptism.

<sup>2</sup> *RB*, chap. 2.2, 172: *Christi enim agere vices in monasterio creditur ...*

<sup>3</sup> This is not to suggest that guest preachers were excluded, or that others could not on occasion substitute for the abbot. For a list of the days when the abbot was expected to preach in chapter, see Danièle Choisselet and Placide Vernet, eds., *Les Ecclesiastica Officia cisterciens du XII<sup>ème</sup> siècle*, *La Documentation Cistercienne* 22 (Reiningue, 1989) Cap. 65, ll.3–5, 190.

<sup>4</sup> [The *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* which appear in volumes 1 and 2 of *SBO* will be cited as *SC*, *SBO*.] *SC* "Ser.1," par.4, ll.23–5, *SBO* 1:4: *Adest paterfamilias: cognoscite Dominum in fractione panis. Quis enim alter idoneus? Non*

In brief, the sermon preached in chapter had a liturgical dimension not just because it was based on this or that liturgical text, or because it was preached during the course of a liturgical celebration, but because it was itself a liturgical act, with the preacher breaking the bread received from Christ, ever present and acting through his word.

### *Two kinds of preaching*

We should, however, be aware of a distinction between two different kinds of preaching in the Cistercian chapter room. Sermons of what we might refer to as the more formal sort were preached by the abbot on relatively few officially designated occasions in the course of the year. These occasions, however, always coincided with peak moments in the liturgical year. Go through the collections of sermons by Guerric of Igny, or Aelred of Rievaulx, or Bernard of Clairvaux in volumes 4 and 5 of the Leclercq edition, and you will find that the list of sermons includes all the days assigned sermons in the Cistercian customary, namely: the first Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, the Birth of St John the Baptist, Sts Peter and Paul, St Benedict, All Saints, the four solemnities of Mary (that is, Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, Birth of Mary), and the anniversary of the dedication of the monastery church.<sup>5</sup> Occasional sermons not fitting within this cycle are relatively few. The First Sunday of Lent generally was given special consideration; and Guerric of Igny's index of sermons includes a Rogation Day sermon, and a sermon for "stirring up devotion at psalmody".<sup>6</sup> In the collection of twenty-four of Aelred's sermons edited by Hugh Talbot, there are, besides two Lenten sermons, two sermons preached at synods;<sup>7</sup> and in the two series of Aelred's sermons

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*equidem ego mihi istud temere arrogaverim. SC, "Ser.1," par.4, ll.1-2 SBO 1:5: O piissime, frange esurientibus panem tuum, meis quidem, si dignaris, manibus, sed tuis viribus.*

<sup>5</sup> See above, note 3.

<sup>6</sup> For the indices of Guerric's sermons, see Guerric d'Igny, *Guerric d'Igny Sermons*, eds. John Morson and Hilary Costello, Tome 1, *Sources chrétiennes* 166 (Paris, 1970) 388; *ibid.*, Tome 2, *Sources chrétiennes* 202 (Paris, 1973) 589-90.

<sup>7</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Sermones inediti B. Aelredi Abbatis Rievallensis*, ed. C.H. Talbot, *Series Scriptorum S. Ordinis Cisterciensis*, 6 vols. (Rome, 1952-75)

from Clairvaux sources more recently edited by Fr Gaetano Raciti, the only exception in the first Clairvaux collection is a single synodal sermon; and in the second collection, a Holy Week sermon.<sup>8</sup> Isaac of Stella is exceptional in this as in other respects, because his concrete situation on the Isle of Ré was so exceptional. The only thing these isolated monks had in opulent abundance, he wrote, was poverty. Books were few, commentaries fewer still.<sup>9</sup> So Isaac preached, preached magnificently and profoundly, in cycles of sermons based on the gospels of the Sundays from between Epiphany and the Third Sunday of Lent. Bernard, too, was a great one for preaching on days other than those designated by the Usages, as his sermons on Psalm 90, or for the first Sunday of November, or on the Song of Songs attest. Again, that heteroclite collection of sermons, sermon outlines, and sermon sketches, known as the *Sermones de diversis*, suggests that Bernard was not slow to preach the word in season, as prescribed by the Usages, as well as out of season, according to the dictate of circumstances.

But besides this liturgical preaching of a more formal sort, there was the day-to-day commentary on the Rule of St Benedict, a passage of which was daily read in chapter. At the conclusion of the passage assigned to the day, the reader was instructed to carry the book to the abbot and point out the text on which the abbot was then to comment. The abbot, however, could have the book taken to any other monk seated in the chapter room; and it would be that monk who provided the commentary for the day.<sup>10</sup> But this was quite distinct from the more formal sermonizing which was an abbatial or at least clerical function, a sermonizing which marked the chief articulations of the liturgical year, and which, on the

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1:191.

<sup>8</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Aelredi Rievallensis Sermones I–XLVI. Collectio Claraevallensis prima et secunda*, ed. Gaetano Raciti, CCCM 2A (Turnhout, 1989) 421–2.

<sup>9</sup> *Inter quietae et amabilis paupertatis nostrae copiosas inopias, librorum et maxime commentariorum, ut cernitis, penuria sumus opimi.* Isaac of Stella, *Isaac de l'Étoile Sermons*, Tome 2. *Sermo Decimusoctavus In Sexagesima* 1, eds. Anselm Hoste, Gaston Salet, Gaetano Raciti, Sources chrétiennes 207 (Paris, 1974) 8. See also the opening of Isaac's fifth sermon for Sexagesima, *ibid.*, 62: *Quoniam, fratres mei, librorum languentes inopia, de nobis pro lectione vocem vivam exigitis, dicere aliquid necessitas incumbit.*

<sup>10</sup> Choisselet and Vernet, eds., *Les Ecclesiastica*, Cap. 70, nos. 27–9, 204: ... *inclinet lector et offerat librum abbati. Abbas vero vel accipiat et exponat: vel alii innuat deferendum. Cui lector ostendat sententiam quam exponere debet.*

basis of the sermons handed down to us by manuscript tradition, must have cost the preacher much by way of careful, toilsome preparation.

*The homeliness of Cistercian preaching*

It has become fashionable in recent times for those concerned with homiletics to make a distinction between the sermon and the homily. The sermon represents a sacred discourse of a loftier, more literary sort; while the homily represents a friendly, homely exchange between preacher and the listening faithful, based on texts culled from the liturgy of the day. We may well doubt whether the Cistercians were particularly aware of such a distinction. Their preaching took place within a closely knit family of brethren who shared the same ideals and enthusiasms and struggles, who were engaged in the same spiritual quest, and who, despite the variety of their backgrounds and types of experience, lived together closely and on familiar terms, day in, day out. Chapter room preaching was accordingly conditioned by the immediate milieu, so that even the "loftiest" discourse bore the marks of familiarity and intimacy. This special *cachet* of Cistercian preaching was perhaps encouraged, too, by the fact that, though based on texts drawn from the liturgy of the day, the preaching took place, never in church, but in the chapter room, with the brethren seated shoulder to shoulder in a kind of circle of which the preacher formed a part. It is true, of course, that in even the most formal kind of sacred discourse of an earlier age, a Pope Gregory the Great felt free to introduce even a solemn Easter sermon with a reference to the indisposition of his stomach;<sup>11</sup> still, one wonders whether a Bernard of Clairvaux would have preached in church sermons which he preached in chapter, such as the splendid one in which he compared the monastic community to a set of teeth.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Gregory, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 11, 21; PL 76, 1169C: *Multis vobis lectionibus, fratres carissimis, per dicatum loqui consuevi; sed quia lassesciente stomacho ea quae dictaveram legere ipse non possum ...*

<sup>12</sup> *De diversis, De proprietatibus dentium*, "Ser.93," SBO 6.1:349–51.



*The role of the community*

As a liturgical act, then, based on a liturgical text or theme, the chapter room sermon was much conditioned by the immediate milieu. This was, indeed, something of a *topos* in Cistercian circles: that the preacher's gift of speech was proportionate to the dispositions of the listeners. We know that on one feast day of the birth of John the Baptist, Isaac of Stella gave his brethren something of a tongue-lashing:

For some time, dearly beloved, I have seen you more lukewarm than usual, more bored with listening than usual. The result is, I admit, that I myself have become more lukewarm and more incapable of speech. For the attention of the disciple stimulates the diligence of the teacher. The more one listens with devotion, the more one speaks with competence.<sup>13</sup>

Guerric of Igny is rather more positive. He says:

The Bridegroom gives the preacher confidence to speak from the goodwill and the attention of his hearers. They do not refuse belief and interrupt or argue, they do not compete with him and take away his good name and mock him, they are not lukewarm and do not go to sleep or yawn. Rather they are friends, attentive and listening; their love and their merit can obtain the gift of the Word and of the Spirit for him who preaches the Gospel to them.<sup>14</sup>

One suspects, alas, that Guerric is protesting a bit too much, and that there were, indeed, among his hearers, as in more than one Cistercian abbey, monks who did drowse off or did yawn. But here the important thing is that it is the love and merit of the listeners who can obtain the gift of the Word and of the Spirit for him who preaches the gospel to them.

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<sup>13</sup> Isaac of Stella, *Isaac de l'Etoile. Sermons*, Tome 3. *Sermo Quadragesimusoctavus In eodem Festo (Ioannis Baptistae)*, ed. Gaetano Raciti, Sources chrétiennes 339 (Paris, 1987) 152–3: *Olim, dilectissimi, cernimus vos plus solito tepidos et quasi accidiosos factos ad audiendum. Unde et nos tepidiores et imbecilliores, fateor, facti sumus ad loquendum. Attentio namque discipuli diligentiam adhibet doctori. Et quo devotius quisque auditur, eo studiosius loquitur.*

<sup>14</sup> Guerric d'Igny, *Sermons*, Sources chrétiennes 202, *Sermo ad excitandam devotionem in psalmodia*, Tome 2, 528: *Si autem praedicatorum exhortatur, fiduciam ei loquendi tribuit de benevolentia et attentione auditorum: quia scilicet non increduli obloquuntur aut litigant, non aemuli detrectant aut subsannant, non tepidi dormitant aut oscitant; sed amici attenti auscultant; quorum amor et meritum possit evangelizanti impetrare verbum et spiritum.* Translation from Guerric of Igny, *Guerric of Igny. Liturgical Sermons*, translated by Cistercian monks, vol. 2. Cistercian Fathers Series 32 (Spencer, Mass., 1971) 218.

Bernard describes much the same phenomenon in his first Septuagesima sermon:

Sometimes even during the sermon it seems to me that I can actually feel the burning fervor of your hearts. For the more plentifully you suck out the milk of the word, the more abundantly does the Holy Spirit replenish my breasts; and the more speedily you swallow down what is offered, the more copious the supplies given to me for your nourishment.<sup>15</sup>

In brief, the nature and quality of liturgical preaching in Cistercian monasteries was much conditioned by the audience of listeners. My own impression is that, in general, the quality of that audience of listeners was high. We may take with a grain of salt the opening paragraph of Bernard of Clairvaux's first sermon on the Song of Songs, where Bernard suggests that those to whom he is addressing himself are all spiritually mature and perfect in wisdom.<sup>16</sup> Still, my own impression—and it is only an impression, and an impression that lends itself to further study and debate—is that the typical Cistercian monk was the educated cleric, perhaps from the university or cathedral school milieu, who, somewhat disillusioned by the limitations of what he had received by way of intellectual formation, came to places like Clairvaux, where the real action lay. Thus, when Guerric of Igny, himself a former master of the school of Tournai, preached in chapter on, say, the Assumption of Our Lady, he was preaching before a group of monks which included, in all probability ex-students and clerics learned in things human and divine, ex-students and clerics, perhaps, of the nearby cathedral school of Reims. There is, for instance, that remarkable sermon where Bernard of Clairvaux refers to a line from Origen's Homily 7 on Leviticus which, when read in community, had given rise to an unwonted amount of grunting and muttering on the part of the brethren. Only a theologically sophisticated listener could have detected in Origen's—for us—rather innocuous statement:

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<sup>15</sup> In *Septuagesima*, "Ser.1," par.2, ll.11–4, SBO 4:346: *Etenim quanto abundantius sugitis, tanto amplius replet virtus Spiritus Sanctus, et tanto copiosius datur quod propinem vobis, quanto citius quod propinatur hauritis*. Translation by a priest of Mount Melleray [Ailbe Luddy], *St. Bernard's Sermons for the Seasons and Principal Festivals of the Year*, vol. 2 (Westminster, Maryland, 1950) 58.

<sup>16</sup> SC, "Ser.1," par.1, ll.6–9, SBO 1:3.

My Savior grieves over my sins, and is in sorrow so long as we persist in error.<sup>17</sup>

One wonders how those monk-theologians would have reacted had they heard Pascal's: "Jesus is in agony until the end of the world." As it was, Bernard did his best to give Origen's word the most benign possible interpretation.

*Cistercian preaching within the tradition at large*

But the quality of Cistercian liturgical preaching was conditioned, too, by the tradition of liturgical preaching received through the collections of sermons and homilies read during the Divine Office and in refectory and in the cloister shortly before compline. In his Rule, St Benedict had limited the liturgical readings of the Night Office to Scripture or else to commentaries on Scripture by "reputable and orthodox catholic fathers".<sup>18</sup> The Cistercian Night Office homiliary was accordingly composed almost exclusively of material drawn from that most influential of all medieval homiliaries, the one compiled by Paul the Deacon, without the slightest admixture of homilies by later and lesser luminaries such as Haymo or Eric, both of Auxerre.<sup>19</sup> A further point of reference was the list of books received by the church and included in the Pseudo-Gelasian *Decretum* transmitted by all the great systematic collections of sacred canons.<sup>20</sup> The standard of liturgical preaching was set then, by Ambrose, Augustine, Bede, Gregory, Leo, and Maximus.

And certainly, though author differs from author, it can be said in general, on the basis of those twelfth-century Cistercian

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<sup>17</sup> *De diversis, Recapitulatio quorundam verborum Origenis*, "Ser. 34," par.1, ll.14–15, SBO 6.1:228.

<sup>18</sup> RB 9, 204: *expositiones ... quae a nominatis et orthodoxis catholicis patribus factae sunt.*

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed check-list of the contents of the Cistercian Night Office lectionary, see Réginald Grégoire, "L'homiliale cistercien du manuscrit 114 (82) de Dijon," *Cîteaux. Commentarii Cistercienses* 28 (1977) 133–205.

<sup>20</sup> See, among the canonists familiar to the early Cistercians, Ivo of Chartres, *Decretum*, Pars IV, cap. 64, *De libris authenticis quos recipit Ecclesia prater illos qui in canone sunt. Ex decretis Gelasii papae de libris authenticis, et apocryphis*; PL 161, 278B–80B. The text had appeared earlier in Burchard of Worm's *Decretum*, Liber 3, cap. 217–21 (PL 140, 715–20), just as it was to appear later in Gratian's *Decreti Prima Pars*, Dist. xv, cap. 3 (PL 187, 73–9).

sermons which have survived, that the abbot-preachers strove in their own way to express truth in a style of Latin suited to the message being conveyed: rhetoric and beauty in the service of the sacred word. Bernard was, as in much else, exceptional; but other Cistercian preachers of sermons also deserve literary analysis of the type carried out by Christine Mohrmann in her splendid "Observations sur la langue et le style de saint Bernard".<sup>21</sup> Guerric of Igny in particular invites special attention for the nature of his literary style. Unlike Bernard's sermons, which range from mere sermon notes to highly polished and much revised texts, Guerric's sermons consistently evince a high degree of literary excellence, and are masterpieces of rhymed prose.<sup>22</sup>

All this is not to suggest, however, that Cistercian preachers in general measured up to the standard set by the more prominent among the Fathers of the church, or by a Bernard of Clairvaux, or a Guerric of Igny, or an Isaac of Stella. There is a general chapter statute dating from the end of the twelfth century, addressed to abbots responsible for monitoring the abbatial elections in their daughter houses. They are reminded of their obligation to ensure that candidates for the abbatial office are sufficiently well educated, so as to preach the Word of God in a literate manner for the edification of the brethren. Clearly, preaching in at least some abbeys left something to be desired.

Still, the overall impression is that the standard of spiritual culture and literacy in the average Cistercian monastery was reasonably high. The liturgical sermons which have come down to us represent, of course, only a tiny fraction of the actual preaching. But the authors of those sermons were surely not preaching at a level demonstrably above the understanding of the average monks whom they were addressing.

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<sup>21</sup> Printed as the introduction to *SBO* 2:ix-xxxiii.

<sup>22</sup> Almost any page of Guerric will yield example after example of rhymed *cola et commata* such as these lines from his third sermon on St Benedict (Guerric d'Igny, *Sermons*, Sources chrétiennes 202, 74, ll.23-6):

*Non est illa gratia sed ira,  
illis plane quibus iratus es dari digna,  
quibus propter dolos posuisti talia,  
deiciens eos dum allevantur  
et elidens valide dum super ventum ponuntur.*

*The allusive nature of Cistercian liturgical sermons*

One of the striking features of these liturgical sermons is the allusive nature of much of the rhetoric. It seems to be taken for granted that two or three words drawn from Scripture or the Fathers or the liturgy sufficed to suffuse a passage with a light more perceptible, perhaps, to monks of an earlier age than to us. It was every bit like T.S. Eliot's recourse to implicit literary citations as a means of strengthening his poetic meaning. Anyone, of course, can read the final lines of *Little Gidding*: "And all shall be well and / All manner of thing shall be well", and have a good general idea of what the poet is saying here and earlier in the third section where he writes:

Sin is Behovely, but / All shall be well, and / All manner of thing shall be well.<sup>23</sup>

But for those who here recognize a clear reference to Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*, to the passage where all contradictions and paradoxes are resolved in a love that is from all eternity,<sup>24</sup> Eliot's meaning takes on an even deeper resonance. It is no different in the liturgical sermons of the Cistercians—or, for that matter, in any of their writings.

Take, for instance, the opening paragraph of Bernard's fourth Christmas sermon.<sup>25</sup> It begins on a note of high rhetoric, in obvious imitation of the two homilies of Pope Leo the Great read just a few hours earlier as the fourth and eighth readings of the Christmas Night Office.<sup>26</sup> The opening imperative, *Agnosce* may or may not have been meant to spark a remembrance of Leo's splendid line, *Agnosce, o christiane, dignitatem tuam*; but the diction is Leonine, right down to the rhythm of the cadences: *quanta sit hodierna sollemnitatis*

<sup>23</sup> T.S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909–1950* (New York, 1952) 145, 142–3.

<sup>24</sup> Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, trans., Edmund College and James Walsh, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York/Toronto, 1978) 13 Revelation, chap. 27, 224–5: *But Jesus, who in this vision informed me about everything needful to me, answered with these words and said: Sin is necessary, but all will be well, and all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well. In this naked word 'sin', our Lord brought generally to my mind all which is not good ...*

<sup>25</sup> SBO 4:263.

<sup>26</sup> Leo the Great, *Tractatus Septem et Nonaginta*, ed. A. Chavassee, *Corpus Christianorum series latina* 138, *Tractatus* 21, "Incipit de Natale," 85–7; *Tractatus* 22, "Item alius de natale Domini," 90–5.

... *angusta est latitudo ... tempore dilatatur ...*<sup>27</sup> In a series of rhetorical flourishes, Bernard speaks of how the Christmas solemnity has overflowed from day into night, and how it is an event celebrated by angels in the heavens before being celebrated by men on earth. He uses a text which at first blush seems to be, and truly is, a variant of Psalm 138:12—*Nox enim ut dies illuminata est*<sup>28</sup> instead of the *nox sicut dies illuminabitur* of the Psalm. But the monk listening in the chapter room would have also known that this is the Psalm verse used in praise of light in the Paschal vigil *Exsultet: Haec nox est, de qua scriptum est: Et nox sicut dies illuminabitur*. So the light of the Paschal vigil adds its luster to the light of the Christmas vigil. Then there are the very next words: *cum intempestae noctis hora*, “when in the middle of the night”.<sup>29</sup> The term *intempesta* occurs only once in the Vulgate, in the account of the Solomon’s judgment between the two harlots, one of whom had overlaid and smothered her baby *intempestae noctis silentio* (3 Kings 3:20). On the strength of that *intempestae noctis*, the editor of the critical edition wrongly gives a footnote reference to 3 Kings 3:20. But the twelfth-century Cistercian would have recognized the words as coming, not directly from the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory, but from the seventh responsory of the St Benedict Office, *Intempestae noctis hora*, about the midnight vision of Benedict, who, as he kept vigil, saw the whole world caught up and concentrated in a single ray of blazing light. So now we have, for anyone sensitive to the liturgical resonances of Bernard’s sermon, something of a link between Benedict’s night vision and the blazing light of Christmas night. But this is not all. Bernard ends his sentence with the words, *circumfulsit lux nova de caelo*.<sup>30</sup> Here Bernard takes the words from the preface of the Christmas Mass, *nova ... lux ... infulsit*, substitutes for *infulsit* the *circumfulsit* of St Luke’s account of the annunciation of the angels to the shepherds, and thus provides his monks with yet another liturgical point of reference. Light from the Paschal vigil, light from Benedict’s vigil, light from the Christmas preface and the annunciation to the shepherds, all in sixteen words of a single sentence!

<sup>27</sup> “Ser.” 4,” par.1, ll.3–5, *SBO* 4:263.

<sup>28</sup> “Ser.” 4,” par.1, l.6, *SBO* 4:263.

<sup>29</sup> “Ser.” 4,” par.1, l.6, *SBO* 4:263.

<sup>30</sup> “Ser.” 4,” par.1, l.7, *SBO* 4:263.

*The liturgical culture of twelfth-century Cistercian monks*

One might object that such allusions would be far too subtle and far too fleeting for the average monk to recognize. Perhaps, but the twelfth-century monk had something of an advantage over us moderns. He knew by heart major portions of Office and Mass. The Psalter had to be memorized during his year-long novitiate. For the other chanted parts of Mass and Office, there was a single antiphonary, a single gradual, placed on a lectern in the center of choir. Those monks who had not yet memorized the antiphons and responsories had to leave their place in choir and chant from these books at the proper moment. But this was at a time before the introduction of massive choirbooks. No recoverable twelfth-century gradual or antiphonary is notable for its large dimensions. At best, these books could serve only as a reminder of texts and melodies already half-known by heart. So the monk was expected to have all these texts, all these melodies within, so to speak, the *bibliotheca cordis sui*, that is, the library of his heart. Accordingly, more of them than we might think may well have recognized a fragment barely touched upon, such as those three words: "*Intempestae noctis hora*." After all, they knew or half-knew text and melody by heart.

It should be noted, too, that these were texts and chants recurring year after year, many of them on a frequent basis. Recognition of a fragment taken from a Common reading repeated three or four times a year would hardly have been unusual. Again, one of the concerns evident in the early Cistercian liturgical reforms was a distinct tendency toward simplification. The multiple choices characteristic of liturgical books of an earlier period were virtually eliminated. Simplification of this kind rendered memorization somewhat easier.

*Biblical exegesis and liturgical texts*

As for the exegesis of the liturgical texts, these were treated no differently from biblical texts in general. We all are familiar with the Latin distich which identifies the four main types of exegesis:

*Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,  
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.*<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The distich provides the point of departure for all three volumes of the

Fr de Lubac insightfully notes that while a Benedictine such as Rupert of Deutz, writing in the great classical tradition, favors the objectivity of an exegesis which sees in Christ and the church and the sacraments the fulfillment of the Old Dispensation, the Cistercians tended to move quickly on to what was popularly styled the "moral" interpretation of the sacred texts.<sup>32</sup> By "moral" they did not mean simply an interpretation which stresses the ethical imperatives arising from a sacred text. Rather, the "moral" interpretation of Scripture was aimed at showing the monk how best to enter into and interiorize the objective realities mediated through the sacred text. Their vocabulary did not admit of the modern term "interiorization", but "interiorization" expresses fairly well one of their principal concerns. It was not enough for a Guerric of Igny and his brethren that Christ be born for us, in the double sense of "for": for our sakes, and in our stead. For Christ also has to be born in us, and we re-born in him.<sup>33</sup> Again, the love song between the Bridegroom and his Bride, the church, had to become also the love song between the Word and us. As William of St Thierry has it, what we read about the Bride and Bridegroom has to be—to borrow once again, modern terminology—realized or actualized within our very selves. This is active participation in the finest sense of the word: *agatur in nobis quod legitur a nobis*.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Bible as mediated by the Fathers and the liturgy*

It is remarkable, the extent to which biblical texts used by Cistercian preachers, were taken not directly from the Bible but from the Bible as utilized by the liturgy. I recall Fr Jean Leclercq several times joking to the effect that Bernard never read the Bible. Once

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masterwork by Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, 3 Tomes (Paris, 1959–1964).

<sup>32</sup> See the whole of the remarkable chapter 9, "La tropologie mystique," *ibid.* Tome 1, 549–620.

<sup>33</sup> The first three Christmas sermons are developments of the Isaian text (Is 9:6) which served as the entrance antiphon of the third Mass of Christmas: *Puer natus est nobis; et filius datus est nobis*.

<sup>34</sup> The preface to William's *Expositio super Cantica Canticorum* concludes with a prayer to the Holy Spirit which reflects the chief preoccupation of Cistercian exegetes: *Sancte Spiritus, te invocamus, ut amore tuo repleamur, o amor, ad intelligendum canticum amoris, ut et nos colloquii Sponsi et Sponsae aliquatenus efficiamur participes, ut agatur in nobis quod legitur a nobis*. (PL 180, 475A.)



his listeners had sufficiently recovered, he would go on to explain that Bernard knew the Bible through its use in the liturgy. I suspect this is a somewhat pious exaggeration, but it certainly is true: time and time again Fr Jean Leclercq, in his critical edition of Bernard's works, rightly identifies biblical texts as being quoted in their liturgical form. It might be added, however, that almost every time his critical apparatus identifies a biblical text as being from a pre-Vulgate version, the source of that particular text is not in the first instance a pre-Vulgate Bible, but rather a patristic source familiar to the brethren from the liturgy or from reading in refectory or reading before compline. As often as not, the biblical texts utilized by the Cistercians in their sermons were biblical texts, drawn not directly from the Scriptures, but from ecclesiastical writers and from glossed bibles. Consequently, the Scripture texts as they appear in so many sermons by Cistercian authors were surrounded with resonances of the patristic exegesis at large.

*Cistercian liturgical sermons and the mysterium salutis*

A further characteristic in the liturgical sermons of the early Cistercians is their sense of the unity of the liturgical year, the unity of the whole history of salvation, the unity of the whole Mystery of Christ. For Bernard of Clairvaux, as for the Fathers of the church before him, when Eve was drawn from Adam's side, the church born from the open side of Christ on the cross was already adumbrated and somehow mysteriously present.<sup>35</sup> And when Bernard preached about the Palm Sunday procession, it was not just about the procession of Jesus into Jerusalem, where he was to meet his passion and death; it was also about the final procession of the faithful into the glory of the eschatological kingdom.<sup>36</sup> The important articulations of the liturgical year were hardly ever taken in isolation; rather, one called for the others; and Advent would not have been Advent did it not point forward to the coming

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<sup>35</sup> See, for instance the final lines of the first paragraph of Bernard's second sermon for Septuagesima, "Ser. 2," par.1, ll.3-14, *SBO* 4:350, where the sleep cast upon Adam while Eve was being fashioned from one of his ribs points to the sleep of Jesus on the cross while the church was being fashioned from his side opened by the spear.

<sup>36</sup> See especially Bernard's first Palm Sunday sermon, *De processione et passione*, "Ser. 1," *SBO* 5:42-5.

of Christ at the end of time. Accordingly, Guerric of Igny was not just being fanciful when he preached his first sermon on the Resurrection using a responsory text taken from the Third Sunday of Lent;<sup>37</sup> and it is not surprising that one of Bernard's sermons about the spiritual resurrection of the sinner monk, preached at a September general chapter, should have been misclassified as his second sermon for Easter.<sup>38</sup>

### Summary

In the final analysis, then, liturgy and Scripture were essentially two modes of presence of the same essential reality, Christ, in his mystery, present and acting; and it was the function of the sermon, in which Christ was the prime actor, to bring together Scripture and the liturgy in such a way that the monk himself could become a sharer in those realities present through the medium of liturgy and Scripture.

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<sup>37</sup> Responsory 11 for the third Sunday in Lent, cited with minor variations in Guerric's first Easter Sermon, *Guerric d'Igny Sermons*, Sources chrétiennes 202, 11.1-4, 216: *Nuntiaverunt Iacob dicentes: Ioseph vivit. Quo audito revixit spiritus eius et ait: Sufficit mihi si Ioseph filius meus vivit. Vadam et videbo eum antequam moriar.*

<sup>38</sup> Bernard's second Easter Sermon, "Ser. 3," *SBO* 5:95-102, which a number of manuscripts identify as having been preached *ad abbates*.



## GENERAL INDEX

- Abels, Richard 188, 193  
 active life  
   monastic 7–9  
 (see also Benedictine order; Carthusian order; Cistercian order; contemplative life; Denys the Carthusian; Dominican order; Jacques de Vitry; mixed life)  
 Acton, Ralph 272  
   *Sermones dominicales* 272, 272n  
 Adam and Eve 348  
   in sermons 348n  
 Adam of Dryburgh 54, 54n  
   sermons 295–6  
 Adam of Perseigne 216n, 217n  
 Adam the Carthusian (see Adam of Dryburgh)  
 Admont, double monastery 175n  
 Advent 348  
 Aelred of Rievaulx 272, 337  
   sermons 338  
 Ämterbuch (see “Book of Offices”)  
 Afflighem, convent 213, 213n  
 Agnes 105  
   in the writings of Humility of Faenza 138  
 agriculture, image of  
   in literature 163, 163n  
 Aimo of Bazoches 300  
 Alan of Lille 4, 15, 180  
   manuscript of works 274n  
 Alan of Tewkesbury, sermons 96  
 Albert the Great 61  
   *Compendium theologiae veritatis* 64n  
   *De laudibus Mariae Virginis* 64n  
 Albigensian Crusade (see crusades)  
 Alcock, John 102–6, 116  
   *Spousage of a Virgin* 104, 115  
 Alexander III, pope 165, 178  
 Alexander of Hales 271  
 Alighieri, Dante (see Dante Alighieri)  
 allegory 177, 177n, 239  
 alms 214  
 Alnwick, William 110  
   visitation records 110  
   visitation sermons 110  
 alphabetization 269, 274  
 Alsace 75, 79  
 Ambrose of Milan 265, 272, 342  
   hymns 42, 331  
 Amesbury, convent 102  
 Anastasius IV, pope 178  
 anchorites 146  
*Ancrene Wisse* 106  
 Andrew of St Victor 271  
   works in medieval English libraries 265  
 Angela of Foligno 135  
 Angelo Clareno 157  
 angels, in the writings of Humility of Faenza 134n, 134, 138  
 animals  
   in Cathar sermons 186  
   in literature 151, 169, 169n, 172–3, 180  
 Anselm of Canterbury 265  
 Anselm of Laon 265, 265n, 270  
 Antichrist 174, 220  
 antiphons 347n  
 antiphonaries 346  
 Antwerp, university 296  
 Apocalypse 171  
   ideology 168  
   in the writings of Hildegard of Bingen 169  
 apostolic life (see *vita apostolica*)  
 Apennines, Italian 152  
 Apulia, and Cathars 196n  
 Ardeni, Silvestro 125  
 Arnold, John 312n  
*Artes praedicandi* 61  
 Articles of Faith 149  
 asceticism 147–8, 152, 154, 155, 198, 203, 212, 213, 226  
 Augustine of Hippo 265, 270, 272, 273n  
   *City of God* 28–9  
   *Confessions* 323, 330  
   *De Manichaeis* 167  
   *De sermone Domini in monte* 313  
   memory in writings of 322, 331  
 Augustinian canons, and Humility of Faenza 125n, 125  
 Auschwitz 323  
 Austria 83, 175n  
 authority, and gender 177  
*Ave Maria* 40, 227, 279n, 289  
 Avignonet 191n  
 Avray, David d’ 273, 276, 316n  
 Baal 169, 172  
 Bamberg 171  
 Barndesley, Richard 261  
 Bardney, abbey 245  
 Barton, Elizabeth 258

- Basel  
 charterhouse 55n  
 council (*see* councils)
- Basyng, William 258
- Bavaria 83
- Beatific vision 30, 32
- Bede 265, 342
- beguines 209, 221, 225, 227, 227n
- Beke, John 111n
- Bell, David 93–5
- Benedict xii, pope 263n
- Benedict of Nursia 145–6, 237, 245, 308, 328, 330, 332, 336  
*Life of Benedict* 309, 328  
 sermons about 343n  
 vision of 328, 330, 345
- Benedictine order, 211, 213–5, 214n, 257–78, 279–92, 347  
 abbot 277  
 audience 259, 262, 282, 290  
 book ownership 257–78  
 corruption of 217  
 diocesan churches 214  
 feudalism 215n  
 general chapter 259  
 libraries in England 257–78  
 monk students 261, 263, 263n, 276  
 nuns 93–119  
 Office 345  
 preachers 258  
 preaching in England 13–4, 257–78, 279–92  
 preaching materials 257–78  
 preaching, places of 259, 61, 262, 263, 263n  
 preaching, time of 261, 262, 263, 284, 285, 290  
 prior 277  
 rule (*see* rules),  
 sermons 100, 274, 282  
 sermon collection in monastic libraries 273  
 use of mendicant material 271, 276
- Bernard de Caux 184n
- Bernard of Abbeville 212
- Bernard of Clairvaux 38, 40, 47, 48, 163, 175–7, 217, 227, 272, 273, 276, 295–318, 331, 337, 338, 339, 343  
 attitude toward crusading 176  
 audience 306, 311, 315, 341  
 Bible, use of 332n, 347  
 Cathars 164  
 compared to Hildegard of Bingen 177–80  
*De consideratione* 214, 301  
*De praecepto et dispensatione* 305  
 Easter sermons 349  
 Jean Gerson 50–2  
 language 177n–8n, 301  
*Life of Malachy* 301  
 literary style 299–311  
 memory 332  
 oral style 311–6  
 oratorical skills 316  
 Origen 341  
 preacher 50–2, 164, 301, 316, 336  
*Qui habitat*, sermons 298, 305, 308, 311  
*Sermon on Conversion* 48  
*Sermons on the Song of Songs* 5, 14, 50–1, 164, 295–318, 319–323, 328, 332, 336  
 sermon, length 309  
 summer sermons 304  
 teacher 178  
 travels in Italy 314, 320, 321  
*Vita prima* 301
- Bernard of Clairvaux (pseudo)- 96
- Bernard of Fontcaude 180
- Bernard of Parma 145, 145
- Bernard of Portes 299
- Beverly, John 110–1, 111n, 112, 112n, 113, 115  
 memorial of 111n
- Biagio 125, 125n
- Bibauce, William, sermons 58
- Biberach, Ralph, *Seven Paths of Eternity* 48, 48n
- Bible  
 Bernard of Clairvaux 322n, 347  
*Biblia pauperum* 267n  
 Cathars' use of 186n, 204n  
 learning 222  
 New Testament 163n, 186, 215  
 Old Testament 179, 215  
 used in sermons 42, 44, 65, 112n, 112, 114n, 114, 177, 186, 204n, 238, 262, 276, 285, 285n, 288, 289, 290, 291, 300, 305, 307, 312–3, 320–3, 326, 332, 335, 341–2, 344, 344–5, 347n, 348, 348n  
 Vulgate 345, 348  
 (*see* commentaries)
- Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* 124
- Biller, Peter 186, 194n, 204n
- Bird, Jessalynn 145n
- Birgitta of Sweden 12n, 108, 116, 178  
 and preaching 179  
 revelation 179  
 sermons about 179
- Birgittine order 93, 94n, 95  
 clothing 108n  
 female scribe 95n  
 literature 107–8  
 liturgy 108  
*Regula Salvatoris* 98

- Bischoff, Bernard 314  
 bishops 219, 221  
     election 262  
 Black Death 77  
 black monks 213–5  
 (see also Benedictine order; Cluniac order)  
 Blamires, Alcuin 175n  
 Bockyng, Edward 258  
 Bogomils, literature 200, 200n  
 Bollandists 129, 134, 173n  
 Bologna, Dominican order 219  
 Bonaventure 48n  
     *The Soul's Journey into God* 48  
 Boniface 94n  
 Boniface VIII, pope 153  
 books  
     binding of 154  
     ownership of 95  
     reference 268  
 "Book of Offices" (Ämterbuch) 89  
 Borgehammar, Stephan 175n  
 Borst, Arno 190n  
 Bozoun, Simon 270n  
 Brabant-Flanders 209, 218  
     women, religious 218  
 Breedon, priory 112  
 Brenon, Anne 183n, 191, 200  
 Brinton, Thomas 281  
     sermon collection 274  
 bride 347  
     imagery in literature 306  
 bridegroom 347  
     imagery in sermons 304, 306  
 Brito, William 271  
 Bromyard, John 274  
 Brother Ferrier 184n  
 Brugman, Joannes 27  
 Bruges 38  
 Bruckner, (Josef) Anton 323, 326, 330, 332  
 Brundage, James 145n  
 Bruno of La Chartreuse, sermons about 57  
 Bruno of Cologne 53  
 Brunton, Thomas 280  
 Buoni, John 147–52, 158  
     canonization process 148n, 151n  
     life 148n, 148  
     preaching 11–2, 149, 152, 158  
     *vita* 148n  
 Burchard of Worms, *Decretum* 342  
 Burghe, William 111n  
 Burgos 175n  
 Burton, Janet 93  
 Bury St Edmunds, monastery 232, 240, 264  
 Bynum, Caroline Walker 216n, 218  
 Cabaret 190  
 Caccianemici, Ugolotto 126n, 126–7  
 Caldwell, priory 245  
 Camaldolese order 7, 147n  
 Cambridge 264  
     hostels, Benedictine 264  
     university 258, 260–1, 263n  
 Canaanite woman 290  
 canon law 219  
 canons regular 212, 218–9, 220, 220n  
     definition of 224n  
 canonization processes 12, 148, 152–3, 153n, 156–7  
     evidence for preaching 158  
     John Buoni 148n, 151n  
     Peter of the Morrone 153n, 153  
     witnesses of 148–52, 155n, 156, 156n  
 Canterbury  
     archbishop 214n  
     diocese 258  
     library 257, 265, 266, 267, 269, 270, 271, 272  
     monks 245  
 Canterbury College 258  
     library 264, 268, 272, 276  
 Carrow, convent 98n  
 Carruthers, Mary 311–2  
     *The Book of Memory* 315  
 Cartham, William III 258n  
 Carthusian order 9–10, 19–35, 37–52, 53–72, 147n, 216, 299  
     active life 24–6  
     architecture 56n  
     chapterhouse sermons 53–72  
     choir monks 55n  
     churches 56n  
     contemplative life 24–6  
     *Customs* 22, 53–4  
     general chapter 22  
     hierarchy 57  
     in England 55n  
     Jean Gerson 25, 39–40  
     Latinity 55n  
     lay brothers 54  
     liturgy 55–6  
     manuscripts of sermons 55n, 58, 59, 66–70  
     preaching 9–10, 53–4, 56, 61–3  
     sermons 56–7, 58n, 61n  
     sin 62  
     sources used in sermons 60–1, 64–5  
     *Statuta Antiqua* 55  
     *Statuta Nova* 56–7  
     *Tertia Compilatio Statutorum Ordinis Cartusiensis* 57  
 Casari, Giovanni Aurelio 134  
 Casey, Michael 296

- Cassian, John 265, 330  
 Cathars 164, 166n, 169, 174, 180, 183–205  
   asceticism 198, 203  
   audience of sermons 183, 191–4, 192n, 193n, 197–8, 203–4  
   bishops 190, 190n  
   books 186, 186n, 187n  
   church 190–1, 200  
   *consolamentum* 202  
   deacons 190, 190n  
   disputations of preachers 193  
   docetism 170, 174  
   dualism 169–70, 183  
   faith 201–2  
   gender 191, 193–4  
   hierarchy 190, 190n, 191n  
   laity 187n, 190, 193  
   *le Be* 197  
   metempsychosis 199, 199n, 200, 202  
   misogyny 194  
   monasticism 12n, 183, 183n, 201n  
   nobility 186  
   *perfectae* 188n, 189  
   *perfecti* 183, 183n, 186, 188, 188n, 190–1, 191n, 195–7, 200, 202–4  
   preachers (*see* Cathar preachers)  
   preaching against 11–2  
   preaching by 11–2, 183–205  
   preaching, criticism of 204  
   preaching etiquette 196  
   preaching frequency 187–8, 189 (graph)  
   preaching language 187  
   preaching, place of 185n, 191, 191n, 194–6, 197, 199  
   preaching style 183–4, 200–4  
   preaching, time of 191, 194–6  
   sermons 185–6, 194, 197–204  
   spies 187n, 194n, 197, 197n, 200n, 203  
   theology 184, 187, 193, 199–202  
   *Vision of Isaiah* 200, 203  
 Cathar preachers  
   Arnaude de Lamothe 188, 188n, 190n  
   Adam Raynald 186  
   Arnaud Huc 186  
   Bernard Bonnefous 204  
   Bernard Fresel 192  
   Bernard de Tilhol 190  
   Bertrand Marty 190, 192, 194, 196  
   Esclarmonde de Bessac 186  
   Geraud Abit 191–2  
   Guilhabert de Castres 193  
   Guillaume Authié 196, 196n  
   Guillaume Belibaste 196–204, 199n, 200n  
   Guillaume Cambraire 191n  
   Guillaume Prunel 190  
   Guillaume Vital 187  
   Jacques Autier 187, 204  
   Lady Guillelme (?) 190  
   Pierre Autier 186–7, 204  
   Pons de Ste-Foy 194  
   Raymond Aguilher 194  
   Vigorous de la Baconne 193  
   women 188–9  
 Catherine of Alexandria 105, 106n, 138  
 Catherine of Siena 82, 123, 124n  
   sermons on 84  
 Cecilia 105  
   in the writings of Humility of Faenza 138  
 Celestine v, pope 153  
   and Spiritual Franciscans 157  
   (*see also* Peter of the Morrone)  
 Celestinian order  
   confessors 153, 158n  
   Franciscan order 157n  
 Celibadache, Sergiu 323, 326  
 cenobitism 212–3  
   cenobites 146  
 Châlons-sur-Marne 300  
 Champagne 303  
 chanting 156, 346  
 Charland, Thomas M. 61, 277  
 Charles II of Anjou 153  
*Charthe longing to the office of the Celeresse of the Monastery of Barking* 99  
 chastity 103, 138n, 226, 226n  
 child-birth 106n  
 child-rearing 106n  
 children 227n  
 Christ 174, 289, 291, 305, 335, 336, 337, 347, 348, 349  
   as spouse 105, 115  
   Cathar sermons 202  
   in writings of Humility of Faenza 134, 136, 140  
   passion of 332, 348  
   sermons about 90, 106n, 107n, 348n, 349  
 Christ Church, Oxford 258, 260, 262  
   library 257  
 Christendom 223  
 Chrysopolitanus, Zacharias 270  
 Chrysostom, John 271  
 Chrysostom, John (pseudo-) 269n  
 Cistercian order 61, 211, 213, 214, 214n, 215n, 215–8, 221, 226n, 227, 295–318, 319–33, 335–49  
   abbatial preaching 336, 336n, 338

- abbesses 175n
- abbots 310
- chapterhouse sermons 316, 337, 340
- customaries 337, 338
- Ecclesiastica officia* 308, 312
- general chapter 349
- horarium* 308, 310
- Jean Gerson 38, 40
- literature 42
- liturgy 312, 335–49
- Night Office 342, 342n
- preachers 347
- preaching 14–5, 175n, 176n, 216, 216n, 295–318, 335–49
- preaching, time of 337
- time, notion of 319–33
- virginity 226n
- Clairvaux, monastic community 302
- Clare of Montefalco 131
- clergy
  - corruption of 167–8, 174–4
  - diocesan 220, 290
  - education 267
  - reform 171, 221
  - secular 218, 220
- Cluniac order 213–5
  - Afflighem, convent 213
  - Fontevrault, convent 213
  - Thiron, monastery 213
- Coleman, Janet 276
- College of St Bernard 38
- Cologne 57, 167, 171
  - heresy 165
- color 235n
- Columbanus 7n
- Commandments, Ten 279n, 283, 285, 286n, 286–9
- commentaries, biblical 265, 267, 267n, 270, 271
- concordance, biblical 268n, 269n, 270n
- concupiscence 239, 239n
- confessors 227
  - Celestinian order 153, 158n
  - Dominican order 90
  - Vallombrosan order 132, 135
- consecration, of monks 239
- Constable, Giles 175n–6n
- Constance 40, 91
- contemplation 221, 327, 328
- contemplative life 217, 227, 237, 240, 241
- conversion 152
  - by preaching 150–1, 154–5
  - of heretics 151
- Copton, Richard 258n
- Costello, Hilary 313
- Council of the Province of Canterbury (*see* councils)
- councils
  - Basel (1431–49) 89
  - Constance (1414–17) 51
  - Lateran I (1123) 8
  - Lateran III (1179) 214n, 217n
  - Lateran IV (1215) 185, 210, 214, 214n, 223, 224, 227, 282
  - Province of Canterbury (1281) 282
  - Reims (1119) 303
- Counter-Reformation
  - in Italy 146
- Coventry 265, 266
- cowl, monastic 335, 335n–6n
- Credo* (*see* Creed)
- Creed 227, 279n, 283, 285, 288, 289, 290, 290n
- Crispino, abbot 127
- Cristina of Lucca 131
- crusades 211n
  - Albigensian 176n, 180, 185, 186, 188, 193, 195–6, 211n, 216
  - Fourth 176n, 216
  - Fifth 216
  - vow 209
- cura animarum* 5–7, 219
- cura monialium*
  - in England 10–1, 93–119
  - in Germany 10–1, 75–92
- cures, miraculous 147, 155
- Damian, Peter (*see* Peter Damian)
- Damietta 221n
- Daniel 103
- Dante Alighieri 153, 323, 326
  - Inferno*, Canto 26, 324
- death 321, 323, 332
  - liturgy of 111n
- Decalogue (*see* Commandments)
- Denys the Carthusian 9–10, 19–35
  - active life 27–35
  - ad status*-like sermons 19–22, 35
  - contemplative life 22–35
  - debate with Carthusian order 22–6
  - De contemplatione* 28
  - expositiones* 20
  - Hugh of Balma 25n
  - learning 22–3
  - mixed life 33–4
  - Jan van Ruusbroec 24–5
  - Jean Gerson 25n
  - preaching 19–35
  - Sentences* 20
  - sermones ad religiosos* 19–20
  - sermones ad saeculares* 19–20
  - sermones de sanctis* 20
  - sermones de tempore* 19–20
  - Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* 21, 27
  - view of Carthusian life 34



- Denyse, Nicolas, *Gemma praedicantium* 96  
 Depynge, Thomas 111n  
 desert, theme in Italian *vitae* 126n  
 devil 172  
     depicted in Cathar sermons 199  
*Devotio moderna* 26  
 dictation  
     by monks 313, 314  
     by nuns 132  
 dictionary, of biblical terms 271n  
 Diessenhofen, convent 91  
 Dina 106, 106n  
*distinctiones* 268, 269, 269n, 274n  
 Divine Office 335, 342, 344, 346  
 docetism (*see* Cathars)  
 Dominic, sermons on 84  
 Dominican order 33, 75–92, 112, 218, 219–220, 222, 268  
     active life 90  
     Augustinian rule 220n  
     confessor 90  
     contemplative life 90  
     education 88n  
     *exemplum* 84  
     hierarchy 80, 89  
     Jacques de Vitry 209, 219n  
     lay sisters 88  
     literature transmission 76n, 76–91  
     nuns 75–92  
     Observance movement 75–92  
     preaching 75–92  
     reform 75–92, 77n  
     school 87  
     sermons 75–92  
     strict enclosure 78, 81  
     *studium generale* 84–5  
     tertiaries 76n  
     university 260  
     (*see also* mendicant orders)  
 Dossat, Yves 185  
 Downside Abbey  
     colloquium 316n  
     community 146n  
*Downside Review* 146  
 Doyle, A.I. 96  
 Drayton, John 272  
 Drogo 271  
 Dronke, Peter 177n  
 dualism (*see* Cathars)  
 Duffeld, Thomas 110–2, 112n, 113, 115  
 Dunstable, monastery 245  
 Dupont, Philippe 60  
 Durham 100, 265, 267, 270, 271  
     convent 260  
     library 257, 259, 264, 266, 268, 269, 272, 273, 274  
     priory 284  
 Durham College, Oxford 284  
 Duvernoy, Jean 183n, 191n  
 Easton, Adam 261  
 Eastry, Robert 258n  
 Eberwin of Steinfeld (*see* Everwin of Steinfeld)  
 Ebner, Margaret 135  
*Ecclesiastica Officia* (*see* Cistercian order)  
 Eckhart, Meister 55n, 76, 83, 91  
 education  
     children 260  
     clerical 132, 267  
     female 130n, 132  
     Franciscan 221  
     gender 179  
     lay 132, 219  
     male 132, 179  
     preachers 132, 259  
 Ekbert of Schönaue 166, 175, 179  
     *Sermones contra Catharos* 166  
 Eliot, T.S., *Little Gidding* 344  
 Elisabeth of Schönaue 163, 165–6, 166n, 175, 177, 179, 179n  
 Elizabeth of Hungary, *Revelations of St Elizabeth of Hungary* 106  
 Ely, library 265  
 Emden, A.B. 284  
 Emery, Kent 25  
 Emilia-Romagna 125  
 Engelthal, convent 80  
 Eric of Auxerre 342  
 etymology 240  
 eucharist, sermons on 83  
 Eugenius III, pope 178  
 evangelization 221  
 Everwin of Steinfeld 175, 302, 303  
     Cathars 164  
 Eve (*see* Adam and Eve)  
 exegesis 346, 346n, 348  
*exempla* 274, 277  
     Dominican sermons 84, 86–7  
     monastic literature 45, 45n  
 Exhortation (for English nuns) 102–3, 115n, 116  
 The Fall 313  
     depicted in Cathar sermons 199  
 fasting 286  
 Fathers of the church 86, 265, 272, 273n, 343, 344  
     biblical commentaries 265  
 Felton, John, *Sermones de tempore* 272n  
 Fifth Crusade (*see* crusades)  
 Fitzjames, Richard 104  
 Flanagan, Sabina 173n  
 Flanders, heresy 165  
 Florence 128

- florilegia* 60, 269, 269n, 322  
 Fontevrault, convent 213, 213n  
 Fournier, Jacques 201  
 Fournier registers (*see* inquisitorial registers)  
 Fourth Crusade (*see* crusades)  
 France, southern 183  
 Francis of Assisi 221, 221n, 245  
     and solitude 157  
 Franciscan order 213, 218, 220, 225–6, 276  
     and Celestinian order 157n  
     and Jacques de Vitry 209  
     and universities 260  
     education 221  
     friars 157  
     nuns 98  
     preaching 221  
     Spirituals 157  
     writings 271  
 (*see also* mendicant orders)  
 Frankfurt am Main 60  
 Frederick I, emperor 165  
 Frederick II, emperor 126, 149n, 151  
 Free will 48  
 Fulk of Neuilly 211, 212, 219, 224  
 Fulk of Toulouse 216n, 219  
  
 Gebeno of Everbach 171, 171n, 179  
     *Pentachronon* 175  
 Geoffrey de Totyngton 260  
 Geoffrey of Auxerre 180, 300  
     *Vita prima* 300, 302  
 Gerard, brother of Bernard of Clairvaux 321  
 Gerard of Villamagna 147  
 Germanus, bishop of Capua 328, 330  
 Gerson, Jean 9–10, 13, 34, 37–52  
     Bernard of Clairvaux 38, 50–2  
     Carthusian order 25, 39  
     contemplative life 39, 47  
     Gilbert of Hoyland 49n  
     hymns 42–3 43n  
     imagery in sermons 49  
     monasticism 37–52  
     *Mountain of Contemplation* 47  
     mystical language 39  
     mystical theology 40, 49  
     preacher 37, 41, 50–2  
     preaching to Cistercians 38  
     pride 46  
     reception of work 39n  
     sermon to Carthusians 39–5  
     soul 41–4, 47–51  
 Gertrude the Great 135  
 Gervase of Prémontré 219n  
*Gesta Romanorum* 270  
 Gieben, Servus 233  
  
 gift of tongues 200  
 Gilbert of Hoyland, homilies 49  
 Gilbert of Tournai 271  
 Giolo of Sellano 147  
 Glorieux, Palémon 37n  
 gloss, biblical 265, 266  
*Glossa ordinaria* 312–3  
 Gloucester College 264, 269  
 Gloucester Hall 260  
 Godhead 200, 203  
 Gontier, Anselm 58n  
 Gorran, Nicholas 271  
 Gracedieu, convent 112, 115  
 graduals 346  
 Grande Chartreuse 38n, 39, 53, 56, 58, 58n  
 Grandmont, monastery 216  
 Gratian 5, 6n, 145  
     *Decretum* 5, 6n–7n, 176n  
 Great Schism 37, 61  
 Greatrex, Joan 280  
 Gregorian Reform 210, 211, 211n, 212, 220  
 Gregory the Great 7n, 7–8, 29, 265, 270, 273, 301, 326, 327, 328, 330, 331, 339, 342  
     *Dialogues* 345  
     *Homilies on Ezekiel* 325, 329  
     *Moralia in Iob* 324–5  
 Gregory IX, pope 209, 218, 222  
     bull 220n  
     curia 210  
     on ownership 244  
     on poverty 244  
     reform 223n, 244  
     statutes 244n  
 groom (*see* bridegroom)  
 Grosseteste, Robert 13, 231–53  
     allegory 239  
     audience 233  
     Bible, use of 235, 237  
     color 235n  
     commentary on *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 240, 246  
     commentary on Psalms 241  
     confessional treatise 232  
     contemplative life 237, 245, 246  
     *Dicta* 233, 234, 235  
     Fathers of the church 235, 240  
     *Hexaëmeron* 235  
     imagery 234n  
     life 231n  
     mixed life 245  
     monastic reform 246  
     monastic reformer 231–2  
     pastoral care 231n  
     Pseudo-Dionysius 235, 238, 243, 246  
     *sermo ad religiosos* (sermon 68) 232, 237, 247

- sermo ad religiosos* 234, edition of 247–52  
*sermo ad religiosos* 234, manuscript of 236–8  
*sermo R. Lincolnensis ad religiosos* 234  
 sermons 232  
 simony 244  
*Tabula distinctionum* 235  
 theology 235  
 transmission of works 233  
 view of monasticism 231, 232, 238–40, 245  
 visitation, episcopal 232, 236, 236n, 244, 245, 246  
 Guerric of Igny 337, 337n, 340, 341, 343, 343n, 349, 349n  
 Güterstein, charterhouse 55  
 Guigo I, Carthusian monk  
     *Customs* 22, 53–4  
 Guillaume de St-Seine 184n  
 Guiraud, Jean 190n  
 Guy of Evreux 271, 276  
 Guy of Vaux-de-Cernay 216n  
 gyrovagues 145, 212  
  
 Hadley, William I 258  
 Hadrian IV, pope 178  
*Hali Meïðhad* 106, 115  
 Hambry, Nicholas 269  
 Hamo de Hethe 262, 266  
 Haymo of Auxerre 265, 270, 342  
 Harrison, Ellen 188, 193  
 Harvey, Barbara 280  
 Hastings, Adrian 146n  
 heaven, depicted in Cathar sermons 200  
 Helfta, convent 87  
 Heinrich of Halle 86n  
 Hélinand of Froidmont 4n, 216n  
 Helly, Ange 58  
 Henfield, Henry 258  
 Henry of Calcar, *Articula pro collatione facienda* 61  
 Henry of Clairvaux 180  
 heresy 163, 166, 172, 221, 287, 289, 303  
     and reform 166  
 heretics 150–1, 185, 262  
     arrest of 166n  
     burning of 166n  
     condemnation of 166  
     conversion of 151  
     deceivers of women 172  
     description of 168–9  
     fear of 175  
 hermits 152, 158n, 211, 212n, 213n, 212, 217n, 220, 227  
     active life 157  
     as preachers 11–2, 145–59, 211n  
     definition of 145n, 145  
     life of 145n, 147n, 148  
     (see also Jacques de Vitry)  
 Hermits of Saint Augustine 147n  
 Higden, Ranulph 274–5  
     *Ars componendi sermones* 274–5, 280  
     *Distinctiones theologicae* 274–5  
     *Polychronicon* 274  
     *Speculum curatorum* 274–5  
 High Alemannic sermons 83, 85, 87–91  
     transmission of 85n  
 Hilary of Poitiers 269  
 St Hilda's Chapel, South Shields 263n  
 Hildegard of Bingen 123, 135, 163–81  
     attitude toward Cathar women 172, 172n  
     attitude toward clergy 168  
     attitude toward heresy 175  
     audience 170–1  
     authority 171, 178  
     Cathars 164, 167, 169–70  
     circulation of works 174–5  
     Cologne sermon/letter 170–3, 180  
     compared to Bernard of Clairvaux 177–8  
     *Expositiones evangeliorum* (gospel homilies) 124n, 167n, 168, 168n, 171  
     gospel homilies (see *Expositiones evangeliorum*)  
     gospel homily 24.2 (see *Expositiones evangeliorum*)  
     Kirchheim sermon/letter 173–4  
     language 172n, 177, 177n  
     language of violence 168–70, 172–4  
     letters 171, 173, 178n  
     Mainz treatise 166, 169–71  
     preaching by 12–3, 167, 170–3  
     preaching tours 170–1  
     reform 171, 173  
     vision of Ecclesia 175n  
 Hilton, Walter 95  
 Himmerod, monastery 303  
 Holdsworth, Christopher 322, 322n  
 Holy Land 331–2  
 Holy Spirit 171, 235  
     as educator 131, 136  
 Holy Spirit, church in Sulmona 156  
 Holy week 338  
 homilies 339, 342  
 Honorius III, pope 222  
 Horti Christi, charterhouse 60  
 Hostiensis 145n, 145  
 hours, canonical 219, 225  
 house-transmission 76n

- Hugh of Balma 25, 34  
*The Roads of Sion Weep* 48, 48n  
 Hugh of Lincoln 62–3  
   sermons about 59  
 Hugh of St Cher 271  
 Hugh of St Victor 24, 219, 264  
   *De divinitate* 314  
   *Didascalicon* 265  
   manuscripts of works 264n–5n  
   works held in medieval  
   English libraries 265  
 Hulsbosch, Gerard 58n  
 Humberstone, abbey 112  
 Humbert of Romans  
   *Liber officiorum* 90  
 Humiliati 209, 225–6  
   Innocent III 225  
 Humility of Faenza 123–44  
   audience of sermons 124, 130,  
   132–3, 135, 137–8, 138n, 140  
   authority 124–5, 129, 136, 140–3  
   delivery of sermons 124  
   depiction in sermons 142–3  
   depiction in *vitae* 142–3  
   detractors 129  
   education 121, 143  
   growth of religious community  
   128  
   language in sermons 124  
   Latinity 130–2, 139n, 139, 142  
   learning, miraculous 131–2,  
   142  
   life 125–8  
   literacy 130–2  
   manuscript tradition of sermons  
   134  
   preaching by 11–2, 123–44  
   recluse 127  
   sermons 123–4, 134  
   translation 125n  
   visions 128  
   *vita*, English translation 125n  
   *vitae* (Italian and Latin) 124–33  
 Huntingfield, Alice 100–1, 101n,  
   102, 115, 115n  
 Hyndringham, Thomas 270  
  
*Ignorantia sacerdotum* 283, 289–90  
 Incarnation 170, 233  
 indexing 270  
 Innocent III, pope 8, 216, 223–4,  
   224n, 227  
   Cistercian order 215n  
   *De sacro altaris mysterio* 290  
   Franciscan order 221  
   Lateran IV (1215) 223  
   reform, monastic 210, 214, 214n,  
   215n, 223  
   sermons 272  
 Inquisition 202–3  
   spies 187n, 194n, 197, 197n,  
   200n, 203  
 inquisitorial registers 183–6  
   Bernard de Caux 184n  
   Brother Ferrier 184n  
   Guillaume de St-Seine 184n  
   Jean Galand 184n  
   Jean de St Pierre 184n  
   manuscripts of 184n  
   Ranulph de Plassac 184n  
   witnesses 186, 186n, 190, 193,  
   194, 196n, 201, 204, 204n  
   “interiorization” 347  
 Isaac 114  
 Isaac of Stella 340, 343, 338n  
   sermons 338  
 Isidore of Seville 265  
 Israel 41  
 Ivo of Chartres, *Decretum* 342n  
 Izbicki, Thomas 145n  
  
 Jacob 106  
   ladder of 43  
   sons of 106n  
   struggle with angel 327  
 Jacobinus, witness 150–1  
 Jacques de Vitry 13, 209–29  
   active life 217, 222n  
   contemplative life 217, 222n,  
   223n, 227  
   *Historia Occidentalis* 209–10, 227  
   *Historia Occidentalis*, translations  
   209n  
   Joachim of Fiore 217n  
   letters 221, 221n  
   life 209, 209n  
   mixed life 218  
   reform 210, 214n, 215n, 227  
   sermons 223n, 226n, 227n  
   *Sermones ad status* 209–10, 224, 227  
   *Sermones ad status*, edition of  
   210n  
   view of canons regular 218–9,  
   220  
   view of Cistercians 215  
   view of Dominicans 209–10,  
   219n, 221n  
   view of Franciscans 157, 209,  
   220, 225–6, 221n  
   view of hermits as preachers  
   211n  
   view of Humiliati 225–6  
   view of ideal preacher 211  
   view of laity 212, 224, 226  
   view of monasticism 209–12,  
   214n, 220  
   view of monks as preachers 211,  
   216  
   *vita* of Marie of Oignies 218  
   writings 209

- James the Greater, in Dominican sermons 85
- James of Lausanne 271, 277
- James of Voragine 272  
*Legenda aurea* 96, 272  
 manuscripts of works 272n  
 sermons of 96, 275n
- Jan van Ruusbroec 24–5
- Saint Jean-en-Grève, parish church 37
- Jean Galand 184n
- Jean de St Pierre 184n
- Jean the Celestine 40
- Jennings, Margaret 274, 280
- Jericho 43
- Jerome 265, 272
- Jerusalem 43, 114
- Jesus (*see* Christ)
- Jews 170, 291
- Joachim of Fiore 217n, 224  
 active life 217  
 Cistercian order 217n  
 contemplative life 217  
 Innocent III 217n  
 view of monasticism 210
- Johannes VIII Kessler 60
- "Johannes-Libelli" 85n, 91
- Johannes Teutonicus 145, 145n, 219n  
*Glossa ordinaria* 145n
- John de Arundel 260
- John de Whytefeld 262
- John of Alverna 130n
- John of Ford 49n, 298
- John of Freiburg 21
- John of Frome 272n
- John of la Rochelle 273
- John of Seligenstadt 59–60
- John Scotus Eriugena 167n
- John the Baptist 105, 332, 340  
 Carthusian order 62–3  
 Dominican sermons 85
- John the Evangelist 85n, 103  
 Dominican sermons 85–6, 90  
 in the writings of Humility of Faenza 126, 128, 134, 137–40  
 teacher 138
- John the Evangelist, monastery 133
- John the Teuton (*see* Johannes Teutonicus)
- Jones, Felicity 204n
- Joseph, husband of Mary 40–1
- Julian of Norwich, *Revelation of Divine Love* 344
- Katarinenthal, convent 91
- "Katherine-Group" 106
- Kempe, Margery 193
- Kerby-Fulton, Kathryn 168, 171n, 177, 177n
- Kessler, Nicholas 96
- Kienzle, Beverly Mayne 167n, 297, 304, 311n
- king(s)  
 as preachers 84–5  
 English 214
- Kingsmill, William 258n
- King's Norton 263
- Kirchheim 167, 171, 173n
- knights 152  
 of Auriac 192
- Knowles, David 146n
- Konrad of Eberbach, *Exordium magnum* 335n–6n
- Konrad of Prussia 78
- labor, manual 153, 219, 221, 225, 226, 227
- laity 224  
 chaste 225  
 married 225  
 piety 210  
 quasi-regular 225–6  
 similarities to monastic life 226–7
- Lambley, priory 94
- Langdon 258
- Langley, convent 112, 115
- Langton, Stephen 214n, 266, 271  
 manuscripts of works 267n  
*Summa Ecclesiasticum* 267n
- language  
 apocalyptic 167–8, 174–5, 180, 240  
 gender 177–8  
 (*see also* violence)
- Languedoc  
 household 193  
 laity 190  
 nobility 186
- Last Supper, sermons about 90
- Lateran I, III, IV (*see* councils)
- Laurence of Subiaco 147–8
- Lawrene, John 267n, 271, 276
- Leander of Seville 324
- learning  
 Bible 222  
 gender 179  
 miraculous 131–2, 142  
 monastic 259  
 preachers 222n
- Leclercq, Jean 50n, 296–316, 337, 347, 348  
*Recueil d'études sur Saint Bernard* 298  
*Saint Bernard mystique* 296  
*lectio divina* 335
- Legbourne, priory 112
- Lehmijoki, Maiju 145n
- Lent, sermons 284, 284n, 290, 291, 337

- Leo x, pope 57  
 Leo the Great, pope 342, 344–5  
 Levi, Primo 324, 326, 327, 330, 333  
     *If This Is A Man (Se questo è un uomo)* 323  
 libraries, medieval  
     acquisition of books 271  
     monastic 257–78  
     nunneries 81, 95  
 Liège  
     canonries 218  
     clergy 303  
     diocese 209, 221  
     Dominican order 219n  
     nunneries 218  
 Liguria 147  
 Lincoln 231, 232, 245, 246  
     cathedral 111n  
     monastic houses 246  
     visitation records 111n  
 Lincoln College, Oxford 111n  
 literacy  
     definition of 130n  
     female 94n, 131–2, 140  
     laity 76–7  
     nuns 82, 93–5, 130–2  
 Littleton 263  
 Liturgy 45, 97, 109, 154, 156  
     and preaching 14–5  
     monastic 153  
 “Lives of nuns” 75–6, 91  
 Livonia 223  
 Longère, Jean 4, 227n  
 Lot 114  
     Lot’s wife 114  
 Louis ix, king 84n, 85n  
 Love, Nicholas 95  
     *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* 107  
 Lubac, Henri de 347  
 Lucius II, pope 303  
 Lyon 39, 40  
  
 Mabillon, Jean 296, 300n, 302n  
 Mack, Burton 163n  
 Magdeburg, and mysticism 87  
 Madyngle, Henry 258n  
 Mainz  
     chapterhouse sermons 10, 59  
     clergy 166n  
     St Martin 166  
 Maisonneuve, Henri 166n  
 Manselli, Raoul 166n  
 Mantua 148  
 Manuscript(s)  
     Andrew of St Victor, works of 265n–6n  
     concordances of Bible 268n, 270n  
     *Expositiones evangeliorum* of Hildegard of Bingen 124n, 167n  
     Hugh of St Victor, works of 264n–5n  
     inquisitor records 184n  
     James of Voragine, works of 272n  
     Nicholas of Lyra, works of 271n  
     production of 88  
     sermons, Benedictine 281  
     sermons for Carthusian 55n, 58, 59, 66–70  
     sermons for English nuns 96, 100  
     sermons of Drogo 272n  
     sermons of Gilbert of Tournai 271n  
     sermons of Guy of Evreux 272n  
     sermons of Humility of Faenza 134  
     sermons of James of Lausanne 272n  
     sermons of John Sheppey 281n  
     sermons of Nicholas of Bayard 272n  
     sermons of Robert Rypon 284  
     *sermo ad religiosos* of Robert Grosseteste 234  
     Stephen Langton, works of 267n  
     *Visio sororis Hildegardis contra Kataros* 166n  
     Worcester Cathedral Library 266, 269, 269n  
 Manydowne, William 262  
 Margaret of Faenza 131  
 Marquard Biberli 85n  
 marriage 226n, 227n  
 Martin of Genoa 147  
 Marton, John 265  
 Mary, mother of Jesus 40–4, 46, 108, 114, 116  
     as allegory for church 40–4  
     as allegory for soul 40–4  
     as educator 136  
     Assumption 341  
     Carthusian order 62  
     in *exempla* 87n  
     in sermons 51  
     in the writings of Humility of Faenza 128, 134, 136–8, 138n 140  
     liturgy 50, 62, 136–7  
     Nativity of the Virgin Mary 38, 49  
     salvation 43, 49  
 Mary Magdalene 106, 114  
     Cathar preaching 194  
     sermons about 59n  
 Mary and Martha 27, 29  
 Mary of Oignies, *vita* 218  
 Marzio of Gualdo Tadino 147

- Masham, Robert 269n  
 Mass 290, 312, 335, 346  
     and preaching 155–6  
 Maunselle, John 111n  
 Maurice de Sully, sermons of 96  
 Maximus of Turin 342  
 McEvoy, James 233  
 Mechthild of Magdeburg 86, 86n,  
     87, 135  
 meditation 90, 328, 335  
 memory 315n, 322, 326, 327, 328,  
     330, 331, 332–3  
     monastic 324  
     Psalter 346  
 (see also mnemonics; Mary  
     Carruthers)  
 mendicant orders 157, 184, 219n,  
     261  
     corruption 203  
     growth of 210  
     viewed by the Cathars 201  
 (see also Dominican order;  
     Franciscan order)  
 mendicancy 219  
 Merivale 245  
 metaphor(s) 177n–8n  
 metempsychosis, definition of 199n  
     (see also Cathars)  
 Metz 171  
 Meyer, Johannes 78, 90  
 Midi 216n, 218  
 miracles 87n, 148, 151, 152  
 Mirk, John 109  
     *Festial* 97n  
 misogyny 155n, 155  
 mixed life 218  
 mnemonics 288, 288n, 330, 331  
*Modus procedendi in sermones* 55  
 Mohrmann, Christine 343  
 Molise 152  
 monasticism  
     abbot 213n, 241  
     common life 219, 238–43, 336  
     corruption 214  
     education 263, 341  
     Innocent III, pope 210, 214  
     Irish 7  
     Jacques de Vitry 209–12, 220  
     memory 333  
     monk, definition of 224  
     obedience 241  
     preaching (see preaching; also  
     see Benedictine order; Carthu-  
     sian order; Cathars; Cistercian  
     order; Dominican order: nuns)  
     privileges 213n  
     property 213n, 242, 244  
     reform 13, 38, 210, 214, 215  
     renunciation 238–9  
     simony 244  
     usury 214n  
     work 309, 310  
 Montségur 186, 188, 190, 191n, 192,  
     194, 195, 195n  
     and Raymond of Péreille 191n  
 Moore, R.I. 168  
 Morimond, abbey 314  
 Morimondo 175n  
 Mosaic code 286  
 Moscardi, Virginio 134  
 Mountain, Jackie 94  
 Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus 50n  
 Müller, Daniela 167n, 172n  
 Muessig, Carolyn 167n  
 Mulberg, Johannes 78  
 Multone, Gilbert 111n, 113  
 Murray, Alexander 227n  
 music, and time 323  
 mysticism 87, 90  
 mystics 136  
  
 Naples 179  
 Neuruppin, convent 86n, 87  
 Newman, Barbara 169n, 173n, 177,  
     177n–8n  
 Newman, Martha 216n  
 Nicholas de Hannapis 267n  
 Nicholas of Lyra 271, 271n, 276  
     commentaries 271  
     manuscripts of works 271n  
 Nicholas of Ockham 271  
 Nicolas of Bayard 271  
 Nider, Johannes 90  
 Nivelles  
     canonries 219  
     nunneries 219  
 nobility  
     Cathars 186  
     as destroyers of heretics 172–3  
 Nördlingen 60  
 Northern Homily Cycle 96  
 Norwich 260, 262, 274, 280  
     library 265, 266, 268, 269, 271,  
     272, 274  
     nunneries 93–4  
 notaries 187  
 nuns  
     abbesses 175, 175n  
     active life 90  
     Anglo-Saxon 94n  
     clothing 105, 108–9, 108n–109n  
     contemplative life 90  
     daily life 77–8, 81–2, 97, 99  
     education 94n  
     enclosure 105, 105n  
     England 93–119  
     Germany 75–92  
     hierarchy of 80, 89  
     Innocent III 223  
     Latinity 88–9

- literature 76
- literacy 82, 88, 93, 94n, 94–5, 131–2
- liturgy 97
- preachers 11–3, 123–44, 163–81
- preaching 10–1, 98–99
- profession sermons 102–6
- reform 79
- sermons 10–1, 95, 100
- towns 82
- visitation sermons 100, 110–1, 115
- Nuremberg 79–80, 82
- obedience 241
- O'Carroll, Maura 246n
- Office for the Feast of St Victor* 302
- Oignies 209
  - canons regular 218
- Oliva, Marilyn 93
- orality 5
  - oral style in the sermons of Bernard of Clairvaux 296–316
- Origen 265
  - homilies 341–2
- Oswald of Corda 39n
- Ovid 115
  - Metamorphoses* 101
- Owst, G.R. 100, 279, 280, 281
- Oxford 233, 269, 271, 276
  - Oxford College 111n
  - studium* 235
  - university 258, 260–1, 263, 263n, 69
- Painting, used in preaching 57
- Palencia 175n
- papacy, depicted in Cathar sermons 198
- Paris 39, 51, 84, 85n, 214n, 219, 221, 269
  - Dominican order 268
  - master(s) 209, 221, 221n, 222, 227
  - preachers 211, 212
  - university 37, 260, 263n
- Paris, Matthew 219n, 231–2, 244
- Parkes, M.B. 314n
- Parkminster, monastery 58
- pastoral care 210, 219, 223, 227, 231, 231n
  - crisis of 222
- pastoralia* 279–92
  - definition of 279n
- Patarenes 150–1
- Pater noster* 279n, 289
- Paul, apostle, depicted in Cathar sermons 197
- Paul the Deacon 96, 342
- Pecham, John 282, 289, 290
- Peckham, William 261
- penance 210, 226, 232
- "Penancer" 284
- pericopes 285n, 290
- Perugia 225
- Peter, apostle, depicted in Cathar sermons 197–8
- Peter the Chanter 269n
  - circle of 209, 211, 214n
  - Summa Abel* 269
- Peter Comestor 266
  - Historia scholastica* 266
- Peter Damian 86
- Peter the Hermit 211n, 212
- Peter Lombard 265
  - gloss 266
- Peter of the Morrone 153–8
  - attitude toward women 155n, 155, 156n
  - canonization of 153n, 153
  - confessor 153
  - life 152–3, 154n
  - preaching of 11–2, 147, 156
  - visions 152
- (see also Celestine v)
- Peter the Martyr
  - sermons on 84
- Petrus Blomevenna 57
- Philip de Luteshale 269n
- Philip of Heinsberg 167
  - letter to Hildegard of Bingen 171
- Piper, Alan 277n
- Plez, Guigues 58n
- Poisson, Andre 58
- Poltri, Placido 134
- Pomery, John 111n
- Poor Catholics 225
- popes
  - anti-popes 165
  - authority 200, 203, 213n
- Porion, John Baptist 58n
- possession, demonic 156n, 156
- poverty 238n
  - monastic 213, 238
  - religious 219, 219n, 241, 245
  - voluntary 82, 213, 220, 225, 226
- Power, Eileen 93–4, 97
- Praemonstratensian order 54, 219, 295–6
- Pranger, M.B. 315
- prayer 90, 212, 225, 226, 227, 240, 335
- preaching
  - abbesses 175, 175n
  - abbot 343
  - anti-heretical 165
  - assignments 261
  - audience 280, 282
  - authority 132, 135n, 135
  - Cathars 12–3 (see also Cathars)



- chapterhouse 53–72, 336, 339
- clerical 5–6
- conversion 150, 154
- debates 225
- definition of 3–5, 158, 183, 193, 200n, 202–3
- education 222, 222n
- effects of 151, 180
- eremitical 145–59, 211n
- heretical 12–3, 204
- lay 5n, 149n
- license 258
- liturgy 335–49, 343
- monastic 5–7, 165, 175n–6n, 211n, 258, 259, 319, 323, 328, 331
- orthodox 183, 204, 280
- parish 220, 262
- penance 154
- prohibition of 175n–6n
- public 175, 175n, 259
- reform 13, 280
- student 261
- technique 316
- textual witness 5n, 20n
- tools 268, 269, 270, 273, 275, 276
- unauthorized 267
- wandering 184, 210, 211, 212n, 216
- women 11n, 123, 123–44, 135n, 149n, 167, 170–3, 175n, 188
- (*see also* Benedictine order; Carthusian order; Cathar preachers; Cistercian order; Dominican order; nuns)
- pregnancy 106n
- The Prickynge of Love* 106
- Promised Land 41
- prophecy 178, 240
  - and gender 178–9
  - literature 177
- prophets 136, 178–9
  - false 168, 201
- Prudentius 42
- Pryds, Darleen 149n
- Pseudo-Dionysius 25, 49, 235, 238, 243, 246
  - Celestial Hierarchy* 27, 32
  - Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 239
- Pseudo-Gelasian, *Decretum* 342
- Rabanus Maurus 60
- Raciti, Gaetano 338
- Ramsey, abbey 231, 244
- Ranulph de Plassac 184n
- Raymund of Capua 82
- Ré, island 338
- reading 225, 328
  - mimetic 329
  - mystical 330
- Rebecca 114
- recluses 210
- Redemption 52, 335–6
- reform, ecclesiastical 222–4
- Reformation 173n
- regalia, episcopal 215
- Reims 341
  - (*see also* councils)
- renunciation, monastic 212
- reportationes* 275
- Resurrection 290, 349
- Revue bénédictine* 296
- The Rewle of Sustris Menoouresses enclosid* 98
- Reynolds, Walter 259
- Rhineland, heresy 166, 302
- rhymes 343n
- Richard de Bromwych 262, 269n
- Richard de Cruce 270n, 276
- Richard of St Victor 47n
  - on contemplation 47
- Richard of Stavensby 268
- Richard of Thetford 273, 274, 274n
- Ripon, Robert (*see* Rypon, Robert)
- Robert de Rothwell 265
- Robert Grosseteste (*see* Grosseteste, Robert)
- Robert of Basevorn 274
- Rochester 262, 271
  - library 265, 266, 267, 268, 270, 274
- Roermond, monastery 23
- Rogation Days 284
- Rolle, Richard 95
- Rome 152
  - monastic reform 233n
  - nuns 223
- Rosanna (*see* Humility of Faenza)
- Rose of Viterbo 123, 124n
- Roth, Friedrich 166
- Rouse, Mary 267, 277n
- Rouse, Richard 267, 277n
- Rules
  - Augustinian 212, 220n
  - Benedictine 7, 97, 145–6, 178, 213n, 217, 257, 305, 309, 310, 311n, 338, 342
  - Birgittine 98
  - clerical 226
  - Franciscan 98
  - lay 226
  - monastic 226
- Rupert of Deutz 328n, 347
- Rypon, Robert 263, 273, 280, 281, 283, 284, 287
  - audience 290
  - content of sermons 287
  - sermons 283–90
  - structure of sermons 287

- Saak, Eric 145n  
 Sabarthès 201  
*sacra historia* 328  
 sacraments 283, 285n, 286, 287, 347  
 Sadducees 169  
 saint(s) 174  
     as source of authority 138, 140  
     cult of 146  
     in the writings of Humility of Faenza 134, 138  
     Italian 146  
 St Apollinaris, church 127  
 St Cuthbert, monastery 259  
 St James, Northampton, monastery 111  
 St Katharina, Nuremberg, convent 78–9, 82–3  
     library 81  
     reform 80–1  
     revolt 79  
 St Martin, monastic community in Mainz 166–7, 169  
 St Perpetua, monastery 126, 130  
 St Swithun, monastery 263  
     library 272  
 St Victor, canonry 39, 219  
 Sala, Torello 134  
 salvation 233  
 Salveto, hermit 152  
 sarabaites 145  
 Sarum Missal 101n  
 Satan (*see* devil)  
 Saxonia 87  
 Sayers, Jane 316n  
 schism 165, 302, 320  
 Schönensteinbach, convent 79–81, 83, 88–9, 91  
 scholasticism 322  
 schools  
     cathedral 260  
     Paris 264  
 Schubert, Franz 310, 321  
 scribal ability, nuns 88, 94n, 95, 95n, 132–3  
 scriptorium 296, 297  
 sermons  
     definition of 4–5, 133  
     eremitical 149, 158  
     Benedictine 257–78  
     capitular 296  
     Carthusian 56  
     Cathars 183 (*see also* Cathars; Cathar preachers)  
     collections 273, 282  
     compared to homilies 339  
     composition 158n  
     elections 275  
     Latin 77, 111, 113, 115, 187, 280, 282  
     length 305, 310, 315n  
     Lenten 275, 275n, 284, 284n, 337  
     macaronic 10  
     model 275n, 290  
     modern 283, 284n, 285  
     monastic 175n  
     nuns 90, 123–4, 134, 173  
     profession 102–6, 115, 115n  
     seventeenth century 316  
     structure 158n  
     synodal 275, 290, 337  
     university 258  
     vernacular 75–92, 96, 97n, 100, 102, 113, 115–6, 117–9, 187, 280, 282  
     visitation 100, 101n, 110–1, 111n, 112n, 115–6, 275  
*sermones de sanctis* 83, 283  
*sermones de tempore* 83, 283  
 Seven Deadly Sins (*see* sins)  
 Seven Virtues (*see* virtues)  
 Sexauer, Wolfram D. 54  
 Shaftsbury, convent 94  
 Shepey, John (*see* Sheppey, John)  
 Sheppey, John, sermons 274  
 short-hand 314  
 Sichem 106n  
 Sicre, Arnaud, spy 187n, 194n, 197, 197n, 200n, 203  
 Simonetti, Adele 134  
 Simon of St Albans 264  
 simony, reform of 244  
 sins, Seven Deadly 279n, 285, 288, 289, 290  
 Smalley, Beryl 264  
 Solomon 321, 345  
     soul of 47  
 “Soloithum legendary” 85n  
*Song of Songs* 40–3, 46–7, 50  
 Sorèze 186  
 soul 41–4, 47–51, 304, 307, 329, 330  
*Sources chrétiennes* 296  
 space 328  
 Spencer, H.L. 282–3  
     *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* 280  
 Sperhawke, John 111n, 112n  
 Sproston, Alison 247  
*Statuta Antiqua* 55  
*Statuta Nova* 56–7  
 Statutes of Paris (1204) 185  
 Statutes of Raymond, Count of Toulouse (1233) 185n  
 Stiegman, Emero 297  
 Stock, Brian 297–8, 314  
 Stone, Robert 276  
 Stunteney, John 258n  
 subdeacons 290  
 Sulmona 156  
 Suso, Henry 83, 91  
 Sutton, Robert 262, 263

- Swabia 75  
 Sweden 179  
 symbolism 177, 202  
 Synagogue 41–2, 51  
 Syon abbey 93, 94n, 95  
   sermons 99
- Tabula septem custodiarum super  
 bibliam* 269  
 Talbot, Hugh 337  
 Tanner, Norman 227  
 Tauler, Johannes 76, 87  
*Tertia Compilatio Statutorum Ordinis  
 Cartusiensis* 57  
 Teutonia 75, 79  
 Theodoric of Echternach 171  
 theology 219  
 Thiron, monastery 213, 213n  
 Thomas à Kempis 96  
 Thomas Aquinas 29–30, 33, 61  
   active life 32, 33n  
   angels 33n  
   contemplative life 32, 33n  
   women as preachers 11n  
 Thomas of Cantimpré, supplement  
   to the *vita* of Mary of Oignies  
   218  
 Thomas de Horsted 268, 274  
 Thomas Gallus 25  
 Thomas of Ireland  
   *Manipulus florum* 269  
 Thomistic thought  
   active life 31–2  
   contemplative life 31–2  
 Thompson, A. Hamilton 110  
 Thompson, Sally 93  
 Thomson, Rodney 273n, 277n  
 Thomson, S.H. 232, 233, 234  
 Thornden, William 262  
 Thornham, William 270  
 Tillotson, John 93  
 time, notion of 319–33  
   future 331, 333  
   past 331, 333  
 tithes 201, 287  
 Torello of Poppi 147  
 Tournai, school 341  
 towns, and nunneries 82  
 transmission of texts, in  
   Dominican order 76–91  
 Trier  
   cathedral 170  
   diocese 303  
 Trinity 49, 51, 136  
 Twyer, Thomas 110–1, 112n  
 Tyerman, Christopher 227n  
 typology 177
- Ulysses 327  
   in the *Inferno* 324
- universities (*see* Cambridge;  
 Oxford; Paris)  
 usury 214n  
   burials of usurers 214n  
   usurers 214, 214n
- Vacandard, E. 297, 310  
 Vallombrosan order 128n, 141,  
   147n  
   confessors 132  
   hagiographers 125, 141n  
   nuns 123–44  
   transmission of the writings of  
   Humility of Faenza 134  
 Val-des-Choux, monastery 26  
 Val-des-Ecoliers, student order  
   219n  
*Valor Ecclesiasticus* 94  
 Van Acker, L. 166n  
 Vauvert 38n  
 verbs  
   authorial plural 305  
   oral style 303–5  
   singular 309
- Verdeyen, Paul 296  
*via mandatorum* 288  
*via misericordie* 288  
 Victorines 219  
 Vidal, Ferdinand 58n  
 vineyard, image of  
   in monastic literature 163, 166,  
   168, 177n, 180  
   in the sermons of Bernard of  
   Clairvaux 164–5  
   in the writings of Hildegard of  
   Bingen 163, 168n, 175  
   in the writings of Elisabeth of  
   Schönaue 165
- violence, language 168–73  
 virginity 106, 115, 226n  
 virtues, seven 289  
 visitation  
   episcopal 214, 232, 236, 237, 244,  
   245, 246, 262  
   records 116  
   (*see also* sermons)  
*vita apostolica* 5, 211, 212, 213, 216,  
   218, 220  
*vitae*  
   as evidence for preaching 159  
   of Italian saints 147  
 vows, monastic 103  
 (*see also* crusades)  
 Vulgate (*see* Bible)
- Waddell, Chrysogonus 302n, 312,  
   316n  
 Waldensians 204, 225  
 Walsham, Alexandra 316  
 Walsingham, Edmund 258n

- Walter, Hubert 54  
 Waltham, John 261  
*Wanderprediger* (see preaching, wandering)  
 wax tablets 314  
 wealth 238n  
 Wenzel, Siegfried 100, 281, 281n, 282, 284  
 Werner of Kirchheim 167, 173n  
 Westminster 280  
 Wichmann of Arnstein 85n, 86, 86n, 87  
     *Miracula et collationes fratris Wichmannis* 87n  
 Wickstrom, John 145n  
 widows 80, 227n  
 William de Bottlesham 266n  
 William de Grymeley 260  
 William of St Thierry 47n, 347  
 wills 145  
 Winchester 269  
     cathedral 262  
     library 272  
 Witham  
     charterhouse 54  
     chronicle 54  
 Wodehull 268  
 Worcester 258, 259, 260, 261, 269, 271, 273, 280  
     library 257, 267, 268, 271, 272, 273  
     manuscripts 269  
 work (see labor; monasticism)  
 works of mercy 279n, 285, 288  
 World Wide Web 145n  
 Wulstan 258  
 Wybarn, Thomas 271  
 Wykeham, William 263  
 Wytteley, William 261  
  
 Yaxham, John 258n  
  
 Zodiac signs 289